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Nick Carter Stories

THE CLEW OF THE WHITE COLLAR

OR

NICK CARTER ON A TWISTED TRAIL

NICK CARTER STORIES

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The Clew of the White Collar;

Or, NICK CARTER ON A TWISTED TRAIL.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

TWO SHOTS IN THE DARK.

"There's eighty thousand dollars' worth in this little traveling bag, remember, Chick."

Chick smiled into the earnest face of Nick Carter and closed the bag with a click.

"Of course I'll remember, chief," he returned. "A man doesn't carry around a fortune, like these Stephen Reed jewels, without keeping well in mind that he has a big responsibility on his hands."

The eminent detective nodded, and threw out his two hands, palms upward, as if to indicate that he had turned over the whole matter to his principal assistant, and would hold him answerable for the safety of the treasure.

"Well, that's all, Chick," he said. "We have had trouble enough to recover this loot, and I, for one, don't want any more."

"Gee, I should say not!" put in Patsy Garvan. "We've hiked halfway around the world to get them, and it looked as if we might have to hustle over the other half before we got through. By ginger! I began to think I'd never see little old New York again."

Nick Carter and his two assistants were in the cheerful library in the detective's Madison Avenue home, and all three showed in their faces that they were glad to be in New York once more.

It was true, as Patsy had intimated, that they had had a long chase to get possession of the eighty thousand dollars' worth of jewelry belonging to the multimillionaire, Stephen Reed, and that they had been successful only after repeated battlings with the most desperate criminal Nick Carter ever had known, John Garrison Rayne, nicknamed the Apache.

"If you ask me," volunteered Patsy, "I think Chick ought to keep that bag until the shiners are put right into old man Stephen Reed's hands."

"I am *not* asking you," rejoined Nick Carter, rather sternly. "Paul Clayton wants to return the jewels to his uncle himself, and so long as Chick goes with him, to see that they get there safely, there is no reason in the world why Clayton should not have that little satisfaction."

"That's what I say," agreed Chick. "Paul Clayton has repented long ago that he ever took the things, and he has proved that he is in earnest in his desire to restore them to Mr. Reed by the way he has helped us run down that rascal Rayne, and the care with which he refrained from taking even one of the jewels for himself."

"What did they do to Rayne in Porto Rico, after all?" asked Patsy. "Has he been sentenced yet?"

"I do not think so. They found him guilty of attacking and robbing the acting governor in San Juan. Also of impersonating him while trying to run away, with these jewels in his possession. That will mean several years in prison. When that sentence expires, I may bring Mr. Rayne to New York, to answer to the charge of grand larceny."

"That's what should be done," nodded Chick. "A man like John Garrison Rayne is a menace to society. He ought never to be at large again."

There was a sudden interruption. A low tap at the door heralded the entrance of Joseph, the trusted butler of the house.

"Mr. Paul Clayton!" announced Joseph evenly.

"Oh, yes!" smiled Nick Carter. "Did you bring him up?"

"Yes, Mr. Carter. I understood that was your desire."

Joseph stood aside. Paul Clayton, the nephew and adopted son of Stephen Reed, came in with a hurried step. He shook hands with Nick and his two assistants heartily.

"I hope I am not late," were Clayton's first words. "You said eight o'clock, didn't you?"

"Yes," was Nick Carter's answer. "I think it is better to go after dark. You will have my big touring car, with Danny Maloney to drive you, and you should get up to Mr. Reed's house by nine."

"He knows we are coming?" asked Paul, rather anxiously.

"I have telephoned that you will be there about nine o'clock. He did not know till this afternoon that you were in New York."

"You told him we have the Sultan's pearls, the diamonds, and all the other jewelry safe and intact?"

"Yes."

Paul Clayton cast his eyes down. Hesitatingly he asked another question, which was the most important of all to him.

"You—you think he will forgive me, Mr. Carter?"

"I feel sure of it."

"Did you ask him over the telephone?"

"No. It was not the sort of thing to discuss by wire, Clayton," answered Nick gravely. "But he told me, before I went to Porto Rico, that he wanted you to come back to him—as his son."

Paul Clayton walked to the other end of the room in silence. He could hardly realize that his uncle, who a few weeks before had told him never to come to his house again, had actually forgiven him.

In a moment or two the young man returned to his chair near the detective's table, and looked at him wistfully. There was another question he longed to ask—one which he found it difficult to put into words.

"Have you heard from—from—Miss Ford?" he blurted out at last.

"I telephoned her to-day, too," smiled Nick. "She will be at your uncle's house this evening, to welcome you home."

"God bless her!" ejaculated Clayton fervently.

"She told me to tell you that she was still Lethia to you, and that she was proud of you."

Chick and Patsy had been busy in an adjoining room during this short, confidential talk between the detective and Paul Clayton. They came in now, and Nick changed the subject abruptly.

"The entire treasure is in this bag," he said in a louder tone. "Chick will go with you to Mr. Reed's house. There he will deliver the bag to you, and you need not mention to your uncle that you had any one with you, unless you want to tell."

"I don't know how I can thank you, Mr. Carter. It seems almost like a dream that I actually can restore my uncle's property to him, and that I shall see my Lethia at the same time."

"You are a lucky fellow to have such a sweetheart as Lethia Ford," was the detective's smiling remark.

"I know it. Are we ready to start?"

"Danny Maloney is in front of the house now," announced Patsy, who was at the window. "He has just driven up."

"All right! Good night, Clayton!"

Nick Carter grasped the young man's hand, warned Chick to keep a tight hold on the precious bag, and smiled as he saw that Patsy was going down to the street to see them depart.

"I don't know but what I ought to have gone, too," remarked Patsy, as he returned to the library. "That's a lot of wealth to be carried around in one parcel."

"Don't you think Chick is able to take care of it?" smiled Nick.

"Of course he is. But I'd like to be along."

"Well, I need you here," said the detective. "I want you to look over this expense account for our Porto Rico trip, and see that I have copied the items correctly. Go over to Chick's desk in the corner. There's a good light there."

He handed two sheets of paper filled with figures to his young assistant, and then turned to some letters on his table.

Patsy was satisfied so long as he could be occupied. In worrying over the long columns of figures, he soon forgot his disappointment because he could not go with Chick and Clayton to the Stephen Reed home.

Meanwhile, Danny Maloney put the powerful motor car over the road at a speed that took it up Broadway in short order. Then it struck out in the open road beyond, until it was humming under the trees in deep shadow, with only the powerful headlights to pick out the way ahead.

"There's the house," announced Clayton, when they were well above Manhattan Island. "It's on the right, back of that thicket of oaks and maples."

"About the darkest place I ever saw, outside of a cellar in the night," observed Chick.

"It surely is dark," assented Clayton. "It's lovely in the daylight, though. So my uncle doesn't mind it being rather thick on a night like this. He has lamps outside his front door, you see."

"Shall I drive the machine into the grounds and right up to the entrance?" queried Danny.

"I don't think so," replied Chick. "What do you say, Clayton?"

"Well," answered Paul Clayton slowly, "I didn't want my uncle to know that I could not trust myself to bring the jewelry up by myself. That's the only thing."

"All right!" quickly agreed Chick.

He understood that it was not only his uncle's opinion which Paul Clayton took into consideration. The young man wanted to appear in as good a light as possible in the eyes of the girl whom he expected to find waiting at the Stephen Reed mansion—Lethia Ford.

"I'll just walk up the drive," said Clayton. "The light of the lamps will shine on me a good part of the way. Anyhow, there is no one about who would interfere. This is such a peaceful neighborhood that I guess they yearn for a little excitement occasionally."

He got out of the car, gripped the handle of the precious traveling bag with his left hand, and held out the other to Chick. Then, with a cheery "Good night!" to Danny Maloney, Clayton swung into the wide gateway, and marched along the semicircular drive in the direction of the big, lighted entrance to the mansion.

"I guess we might as well go home, Danny," remarked Chick, as he settled himself in the front seat, by the side of the chauffeur.

"All right!" responded Danny.

He turned the big car around skillfully, and was about to open the throttle for the homeward trip, when a shot and a piercing shriek sounded within the grounds, followed by hoarse growls and oaths.

Three shadowy forms darted from the gateway and ran at full speed down the road in the direction of New York.

It did not take Chick more than five seconds to realize that there had been an ambush, and that probably the traveling bag had been stolen by footpads.

"Come on, Danny!" he shouted. "Bring on the car!"

He drew his revolver from a side pocket and sent a shot into the darkness ahead of him, on speculation.

Almost simultaneously with the report of his own pistol came the roar of another, following a flash from behind a tree some little distance away.

There was still another explosion, and an expletive in Danny Maloney's voice told what had happened.

A bullet had been sent into one of the front tires of the motor car. A peculiar whistling and scraping, and the big machine had stopped dead in its tracks.

With a muffled ejaculation of rage, Chick dashed down the dark road, pistol in hand. He was fiercely resolved to overhaul the thieves, whoever they might be, and no matter how many there were.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE HANDS OF GANGSTERS.

It did not surprise Chick that the marauders had a motor car waiting for them. In these days, the use of such a machine is the usual equipment of criminals engaged in enterprises where a quick get-away is essential to success.

He could see a long, low, racing car standing against the fence, in the shadow of a line of poplars, and, even as he looked, the three men who had run out of the grounds piled into the car on both sides.

"Let her go!" growled some one.

The machine was a self-starter, and after a labored throbbing, as the engine turned over, the wheels began to move.

If the men had not been so careful to run their car against the fence, to keep it out of sight of any one who might pass, they might have got it away before Chick could get to them.

As it was, he contrived to jump on the back just as it got fairly under way, and went skimming along with it in the blackness.

Chick had only a general idea of what he should do when he did get hold of the thieves. That he was one against four he did not overlook for a moment. But the odds only made him the more determined.

The man driving had sat at his wheel while the other three waited in the grounds for Paul Clayton to pass with the bag of treasure.

They did not know whether Clayton would be alone or not. Their information—obtained from a manservant in the Reed home, whom they had bought—was that Clayton would bring a large amount of jewelry that night. That was all they had found out.

The servant, whose duties included attendance in the living rooms of the family, had heard what he told the thieves, but he did not know any of the details.

Stephen Reed had engaged a secretary after his nephew had gone to Porto Rico. Another member of his household, practically, was Miss Lethia Ford. She was the daughter of his neighbor, Tyler Ford, and as Mr. Ford had been away from home some time, leaving the girl alone, it was natural for her to accept the frequent invitations of the old millionaire.

Since old Stephen had changed his mind about the engagement of Paul to Lethia, he had wanted her near him as much as possible. The result was that there were few afternoons or evenings when she was not in his rambling old mansion.

"I wish I could have got Clayton and Danny to come with me," was Chick's mental remark, as he stooped at the back of the car. "Well, if I had waited it would have been too late. I had to follow these fellows when I had the chance. I can get them behind. That will be one advantage, anyhow."

He could have shot or struck down two of the men sitting in the car before they realized that somebody was at the back of them, if he had been cold-blooded enough.

But that would have been too unsportsmanlike for Chick. He knew these men were thugs, who would have no scruple about taking the most cowardly advantage of a foe, and that they would murder him without compunction if they deemed it desirable.

"I can't help all that," he muttered. "I'll have to give them at least half a chance."

He had very little time to entertain these reflections.

The driver, who had never left his place during the attack on Clayton, was by himself. The other three were in the rear seat.

Suddenly, without warning, one of them jumped to his feet, swung around, and gripped Chick by the neck with both hands.

Taken by surprise as he was, Chick acted promptly. His two fists shot out, and his assailant tumbled in a heap in the bottom of the machine.

Unfortunately, it took a little time even to knock the man down. Before Chick could recover himself, the other two had grabbed him, and, in a twinkling, he was lying on top of the squirming individual he had felled.

The chauffeur heard the noise behind, and increased his speed. He could not turn, but his experience was that, in case of a row, it was always well to get away as quickly as possible.

When Chick tumbled into the bottom of the car, his hand accidentally fell upon a traveling bag.

He recognized the bag as that holding the Reed jewels.

If he had needed proof of the purpose of the men who had taken him prisoner, here it was. They had knocked Clayton senseless, and made off with the treasure.

The touch of the bag seemed to put new strength into Chick. For the moment, however, he could only lie still and await his chance.

He heard the two men over him discussing the question of what should be done with him.

"Chuck him out and leave him!" grunted one.

"We've got to do it where there are no cops," returned the other.

"And there's one now, right under the electric light, over there."

"All right! Keep quiet! He won't stop us."

The chauffeur had slackened his speed as he came into the outer limits of the metropolis. It would not have been well to be held up for speeding, with Chick and the other man in the bottom of the car.

Chick heard this remark about the policeman, and, with an effort, he contrived to get a whistle from his pocket and put it into his mouth.

Before he could sound it, however, one of the men saw it, and snatched it away.

"No, you don't!" grunted the ruffian. "I've a mind to plug you for that! Get your knife, Butch!"

"Butch?" thought Chick. "That's Butch Brown. I thought I knew him. This is the Butch Brown gang. Well, I'm glad to know who they are. We'll round them up afterward."

Butch Brown, who, when he followed an honest calling at all, was employed in a meat market, was the head of a notorious gang of thieves and gunmen. A burly rascal, he had acquired his supremacy mainly because he could fight better than most of his associates.

The other two in the car with him were middle-sized, pale-faced hoodlums, neither of them much over twenty, utterly heartless, and always ready with the pistol or knife. In short, they were typical New York gangsters.

Butch did not take out a knife. Instead, he aimed a blow at his prostrate prisoner with a fist almost as hard, and about as large, as an ordinary paving cobblestone.

But the enormous fist was not as effective this time as it looked.

Chick had not been sparring with Nick Carter at intervals for years without knowing how to avoid an attack, even when he was at such disadvantage as at present.

He ducked cleverly, and the blow missed him altogether.

But it seemed as if it had to strike somewhere, so it landed on the jaw of the man underneath him, knocking him almost senseless, and causing him to emit a grunt that could be heard above the humming of the car.

Chick saw and understood Butch's mistake, and grinned. Then letting drive with his head into the big thug's stomach, he was on his feet, with the bag in his hand, before the third man could get into the battle.

For a second Chick hesitated. Then—he flung the bag out of the car, and climbed over the back, intending to drop to the road.

If he had been the merest trifle quicker, he would have accomplished his purpose.

But Butch had recovered from the temporary loss of breath caused by the impact of Chick's head in his stomach, and, with a shout of warning to the chauffeur to stop, he reached for the escaping detective.

Even then the latter might have broken away but for the fact that the man still on his feet helped the leader by also grasping Chick's coat collar.

"Let go, you brutes!" shouted Chick. "It will be jail for you if you don't!"

This time Chick did get away. But only for a moment or two.

"Bring him in, Mosey!" bellowed Butch Brown to the other gangster. "Get up there, Slimmy!"

"Slimmy" Jordan was the man who had been knocked down by Chick, and afterward punched accidentally by Butch. He had recovered now, and was wrathful enough to kill a dozen men.

He seized Chick savagely, and the three of them dragged him into the car just as it came to a stop.

"Get that bag, Slimmy!" ordered Butch. "It must be nearly a quarter of a mile back. Get a move on!"

Slimmy jumped out of the car and ran swiftly up the road, while the leader of the gang tightened his hold on the detective's collar in such a way that the knuckles pressed into his throat.

"Frisk him, Mosey!" was Butch's next command.

"He ain't got much," grumbled Mosey, as he brought forth Chick's wallet, electric flash, keys, and handcuffs. "This is all, except a little change and some letters and things. There's a handkerchief and gloves. We don't want them, do we?"

"Naw! Nor the keys, neither. Them handcuffs are good, though."

A sardonic leer lighted up the face of the amiable Butch as he took the manacles in his hand and looked them over.

"The latest thing in bracelets!" he chuckled. "Police headquarters jewelry! Exclusive pattern! Made in America! Warranted not to slip!"

As he spoke, he clapped one of the cuffs on Chick's right wrist, and then, with a jerk, secured the other, also.

"Where's his gun?" growled Butch.

"I've got it," answered Mosey. "It dropped to the floor."

"That's enough, then. Where's that bonehead Slimmy?"

"He's coming. I saw him pass a 'lectric light just now."

"Has he got the bag?"

"I guess so. He wouldn't come without it."

"Hey, Butch!" suddenly bellowed Slimmy from the darkness.

"Come on!"

"I'm coming! I've got it, all right!"

Slimmy Jordan was very much out of breath, but he swung the bag upward so that Butch could see it, and the next moment was climbing into the car.

"Good enough!" grunted Butch, taking the bag from him. "It didn't bust open, or nothing like that, did it?"

"Not on your tintype!" replied Slimmy. "It was lying on the grass at the side of the road, up against the curb. I knew just about where it was, and I grabbed it without any trouble."

"Go ahead, Del!" called out Butch to the chauffeur. "Get down to the joint as soon as you can."

"Expect the boss to be there?" asked Slimmy.

"Sure thing. Hit her up, Del!"

The car was moving at a swift pace, and increasing in speed at every turn of the engine.

Chick, handcuffed, and held by Mosey, Butch, and Slimmy, could not do anything to help himself. But he was listening to all that passed around him, and it did him good to know who the rascals were who had taken the Stephen Reed treasure this time.

"When I get out of this, it won't take us long to round up this gang," was his inward remark. "The chief, with Patsy and I, will get the bag back before they can sell anything that's inside of it."

Chick had got to this point in his reflection, when suddenly, without warning, he felt himself lifted from his feet. Then he was shot headfirst out of the side of the car.

As he struck the ground, partly on his head, everything became blank!

CHAPTER III.

A FINGER-PRINT PUZZLE.

It was past ten o'clock on the night that Chick and Paul Clayton went away with the bag of jewelry, to restore it to its owner, Stephen Reed, when Nick Carter's telephone bell rang.

The detective had been busy over papers at his own table, and Patsy was still laboring over the list of expenses connected with the Porto Rico trip. The library had been almost breathlessly quiet until the bell jangled.

Nick Carter answered the call, and listened attentively to what seemed to be a rather extended message.

"Very well," he answered at last, in a tone so calm that Patsy was at once sure there was something important to be done. "I will come as soon as I can cover the distance."

He hung up the receiver, and, sinking back in his chair, stared hard at the table for more than a minute.

Patsy glanced around several times. At last his curiosity would not permit him to keep quiet any longer.

"What is it, chief?" he inquired.

"Stephen Reed has not got his bag of jewelry,' replied Nick Carter quietly.

"What? Gee! Who has it?" blurted out Patsy, as he strode across the room and stood in front of his employer's table.

"I don't know," was the answer.

"Who was on the wire just now?"

"Miss Lethia Ford."

"Where is she? At Mr. Reed's house?"

"Yes. Mr. Reed is with her."

"Haven't they seen Clayton?"

"Yes. He is there, too. He was knocked down by several men in the grounds surrounding Mr. Reed's big house, and the bag snatched away."

"Diamonds, pearls, and all?"

"Of course," returned Nick, with an impatient shrug. "You don't suppose they wanted the empty bag, do you?'

"No. Only it seems strange that they could hold up Clayton right there in front of the house, and get away with it. Where was Chick?"

"Chick had gone away in the car. Danny Maloney was driving. That's what I am rather uneasy about. Chick ought to be here now. It would not take more than an hour for the car to get back, unless something happened."

"What could happen?" cried Patsy. "Except a puncture or a thing like that. It wouldn't take Danny long to fix it, anyhow."

"True. That would have kept the car back long enough for it not to be here yet. I hope that's all it is. Call up a taxi, Patsy. We'll go up to Reed's right away."

Patsy was only too glad to obey, and in less than fifteen minutes the two went downstairs and out to the cab.

A quick direction to the driver, who knew the detective, was glad to be temporarily in his service—and away went the cab, over the route so recently covered by Chick and Paul Clayton in the big touring car driven by Danny Maloney.

They found the home of Stephen Reed in confusion.

Paul Clayton, insensible, had been brought in, and was lying on the old millionaire's own bed, with a doctor bending over him, as he tried to bring the patient back to his senses.

The beautiful young girl Clayton had been in such haste to see, Lethia Ford, was by the side of the doctor, eager to help, while Stephen Reed strode up and down the room, his hands behind him, and a drawn expression on his lean face.

"Wonder whether it is the loss of the jewelry or his nephew being hurt that makes the old man feel worse?" whispered Patsy, as he came into the room with his chief.

"Hush!" was all the response he got.

At the same time, it must be admitted that Nick Carter had involuntarily been asking himself the same question. Stephen Reed had the reputation of being a hard man, who cared more for things worth money than for any human affection.

Still, there had come a change over the old man of late, and it may have been that he realized now how much he did care for this young man, who was his sister's child, and whom he had regarded as his own son before his violent quarrel with him a few months before.

"How is he, doctor?" asked Nick, as he approached the bed.

Doctor Stanton, whom Nick had met before, shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't think he is very bad, Mr. Carter. But I should know more if I were able to get him out of this stupor. He has had an ugly jar on the head. It has caused a concussion, of course. But there is no fracture, so far as I can detect."

"Good heavens, doctor!" broke in Stephen Reed impatiently. "Surely you could tell whether the skull is broken or not, couldn't you?"

"Not always at first," returned Doctor Stanton, in the stiff tone of a professional man who is defending his knowledge of his calling. "I have had an opportunity only to make a superficial examination, so far. From that, however, I should say there is no fracture."

"What was he hit with?" asked Patsy.

"There is a slight indentation, which looks as if it might have been done with——"

Before Doctor Stanton could finish his rather ponderous speech, Nick Carter cut in:

"The butt of a revolver, doctor. Not much doubt of that."

"I don't know how you can tell whether he was hit with a revolver or a brick!" snapped the surgeon. "But perhaps you have some way of deciding that escapes me."

"This is what I go by," returned Nick, as he pointed to a fragment of brass cartridge case in the thick hair of the patient. "The pistol evidently had one or two empty cases in the chambers, and a bit of one of the cases tumbled out when the blow was delivered."

"H'm!" coughed the doctor. "Maybe."

"Gee! You can't beat the chief," muttered Patsy. "The doc never learned anything like that in the medical college. But there's things you can know about wounds that you don't hear about even in hospitals."

"I beg your pardon?" snarled the doctor, who had caught part of Patsy's sotto-voce remarks. "Did you say something about hospitals?"

"Nothing particular," declared Patsy, drawing back.

"He's not going to a hospital!" shouted Stephen Reed. "You may as well not propose that. He's my boy, and he's going to stay here till he's well."

Lethia Ford stole up to the old man and gently took

his hand in hers. He patted the girl's shoulder affectionately.

"Have you seen the jewelry that Clayton was bringing to you?" asked Nick, taking Stephen Reed to a quiet corner of the room.

"No. The blackguards who knocked down Paul got that, of course. It was what they were after."

"Is there any clew?"

"I don't know. Smithers, my butler, ran out first, when we heard the shots. Ask Smithers. There he is, at the door."

"Did you find Mr. Clayton, Smithers?" asked the detective.

"Yes, sir. He was lying near the roadway, on his back, with that necktie in his hand."

The butler pointed to a blue cravat—one of the made-up bows that fasten to the collar button with an elastic loop—that lay on a chair.

The detective picked it up and examined it curiously. It was not the property of Paul Clayton. Indeed, it was a cheap sort of thing, that Clayton would not be likely to wear.

"It was snatched from the neck of the fellow who knocked him down, most likely," remarked Nick.

"It's a lulu, whoever it belonged to," observed Patsy.

The detective carried the cravat to the dresser, where two powerful electric lights were on, and drew a magnifying glass from his pocket.

Slowly and carefully he examined the blue satin through the glass. At last, with a sigh of satisfaction, he put the necktie on the dresser and looked around.

Paul Clayton had moved, and the doctor said he would soon come to his senses.

"I should like to ask him a few questions when he is strong enough to answer," Nick Carter told him.

The detective moved over to the bed and looked down at the patient. Paul Clayton stirred a little, and there was a quivering of the eyelids that told of returning consciousness. His lips opened, as if he were preparing to speak.

"I don't think he is going to be well enough for any regular conversation for a day or two," said Doctor Stanton. "But you might ask him a few things, if it doesn't make him excited."

"What I should ask him probably would have that effect," returned Nick. "I want to know whether he would recognize any of the men who attacked him if he were brought face to face with them again."

Nick Carter was about to step back from the bed, when he saw the white collar which had been worn by Clayton lying on the counterpane. It had been thrown there when hastily removed by the doctor.

What had particularly attracted the notice of the detective was a greasy smudge on the collar. It looked as if it had been made by somebody who had got oil on his fingers.

"May I look at that collar, Doctor Stanton?" he asked.

"Certainly. Think you are going to get a finger-print clew, Mr. Carter?"

There was the suspicion of a sneer in the doctor's tones.

"I can't tell about the clew," was the quiet answer. "But there is the finger print. I should like to see it through my glass."

"Wouldn't you rather go to the library?" suggested Stephen Reed. "You can sit down to the table, with a better light and in more comfort than in the bedroom."

The detective thanked him, and went to the library, with Patsy. He carried the blue silk necktie, the white collar, and his magnifying glass in his hands.

"Got the room to yourself, chief," remarked Patsy, as they entered.

"All right! So much the better. Shut the door, Patsy."

There was a feverish earnestness in Nick Carter's tones that did not escape his assistant. It was seldom that the well-balanced detective suffered himself to betray emotion over any operation in the course of an investigation.

"The chief's got a hunch of some kind," was Patsy's unspoken decision.

"Hold this flash lamp, Patsy."

Nick Carter took from a pocket a powerful electric flash and put it in the hand of his assistant.

"This gives a good light," remarked Patsy. "There's a movable electric bulb here, too."

He placed the electric lamp—one of the kind with a long, flexible arm and a reflector—in such a position that it was directed upon the table immediately in front of his chief.

"That will do, Patsy. I can see well now."

Nick first of all examined the blue satin cravat again, back and front. He merely wanted to be sure that the conclusion he had arrived at was sound.

His magnifying glass passed all over it. Nick Carter smiled. The sum of his discoveries was satisfactory.

"Finger prints enough to hang any one," he muttered. "Now let us see the collar."

He placed the white collar carefully before him and looked inside to see what the laundry mark was. He found not only the laundry number, but the name "Paul Clayton."

"That should be enough to identify it," he thought. "Now to find out what this oily blotch means. Made by the end of a finger, unless I am stupid as well as blind."

He stared through his glass at the mark for nearly a minute. There could be no question that it was a finger print. The lines were clearly defined, and it was possible to make out the pattern of the epidermis in every detail.

"I wonder——"

He began a sentence, but broke off as soon as he had spoken these two words, to fumble in his pocket for a notebook. There was a wide rubber band around this book.

He opened it and turned several pages, until he came to a slip of paper in one place.

All through the book there were pieces of paper like this one, and it was evident that the detective kept important memoranda in this little volume.

"Struck something, chief?" asked Patsy interestedly.

"I think so. I'll tell you when I have compared these." On the slip of paper there were two finger prints. At a glance, one might have seen that they bore a strong resemblance to the blotch on Paul Clayton's starched collar.

Placing the collar against the paper, Nick Carter studied them through his glass, comparing every curve and line, and noting the exact turn of each one.

It took him three minutes to satisfy himself that the prints had been made by the same finger.

"The person who put his finger on this collar had probably been tinkering about a motor car, and thus had got oil on his hands, Patsy," he said musingly. "That would account for it."

"Account for what?" demanded Patsy, puzzled.

"Why, for the oily finger print, of course. That would not be so significant to me if I were not able to identify the print."

"And you can do it?"

"I certainly can!" replied Nick Carter positively. "Only—I don't see how it can be possible."

"Oh, gee!" grumbled Patsy. "Come down to earth, won't you, chief? I'm getting all balled up with this. First you say you are sure you can name the man who grabbed Clayton's collar. Then you switch, by saying that it isn't possible. Who is the finger printer—this crook who works in oil?"

Patsy grinned as he said this last. It seemed to him that it wasn't so bad, for an offhand funny wheeze.

"This man, whose finger print is on this paper, where I got it more than two years ago, and who made a mark on Paul Clayton's collar to-night, is one who is supposed to be in jail in Porto Rico—John Garrison Rayne!" replied Nick Carter.

CHAPTER IV.

WHY THE CAR SKIDDED.

For ten minutes Nick Carter and Patsy Garvan were in close conference in the library.

The famous detective had faith in both of his assistants, and sometimes he thought Patsy was the equal of Chick in seeing to the bottom of a puzzling case at a glance.

"What I want to know is, how can Rayne be in New York, grabbing for the Stephen Reed jewelry, when the chief of police of San Juan, Captain Douglas, has him ready to clap him in the penitentiary as soon as the judge passes sentence?" said Patsy.

"The only way to account for that is to suppose that he is not in San Juan," answered Nick Carter, with a shrug.

"Even so, would he have time to get to New York by now?"

"*We've* done it," Nick reminded him.

"That's so. But it beats me. I've always had an idea this Rayne was something more than a man. Gee! I don't think old Satan has anything on him for pure cunning and twenty-four-carat cussedness."

"Well, anyhow, Patsy, we may make up our mind that Rayne is in this affair. I'll wire to Douglas, at San Juan, and find out how things are there. I know what he'll say."

"What? You're smarter than I am, chief—about that, as about most things," said Patsy.

"He'll tell me that Rayne has been gone from San Juan for a week or more."

"How could he do that, if he was a prisoner?"

"That is the part of it I do not know. It does not make much difference, anyhow. The thing is that he is in New York, and that he has not yet given up his intention to get the Reed jewelry into his possession. He took part in that raid to-night, as sure as you stand there."

"Do you mean that he wore that blue necktie?"

Nick Carter shook his head positively, and there was a slight smile on his face as he turned the necktie over and looked at it again.

"No, Patsy! You never would see John Garrison Rayne in a thing of that kind. Whatever else you may say about the Apache, you must admit that he has good taste in dress. He wouldn't be found dead in such a decoration. We shall have to look elsewhere for the owner."

"Where?"

"We'll take up that question later," replied the detective. "I have little doubt that the man who wore that necktie was the person who knocked down poor Clayton."

"I guess so."

They went up to the bedroom again, and found Paul Clayton so far recovered that he could give a more-or-less incoherent account of the attack upon him.

"I saw a big, rough-looking man spring out from the trees on my right when I was quite close to the front entrance of the house," murmured Clayton faintly. "I didn't know him, but his appearance convinced me that he was an ordinary footpad."

"Big man, you say?" asked Nick. "Had he something peculiar about his left eye—half closed and discolored?"

"Yes," was the eager response. "I remember thinking he must have been in a fight recently."

"No. That injury was received some three years ago. The mark is permanent," corrected Nick Carter.

"You know him?" asked Stephen Reed.

"I believe I do, from the description," was Nick's reply. Then, again addressing Clayton, he asked: "Did you see anybody else?"

"I have a confused recollection of two smaller men—they looked mere boys—coming toward me, and of another older one with a hard face, eyes that seemed to be green, and tremendous strength, taking hold of me."

"This man with the green eyes," interposed Nick Carter quickly. "How was he dressed?"

"In a big overcoat, with a brown business suit underneath."

"And he seemed very strong?"

"Yes. He caught me by the elbow, and it felt as if he would crunch the bones. He held me while the biggest man of the other three picked up the bag and ran away with it. Then the smallest of the more, and, as I tried to break away, he gave me another blow on the head, with the butt of his revolver."

"Another blow, you say?" remarked Nick. "Then you had been hammered in that way before?"

"Yes. That was at my first introduction to them. If the blow had come down squarely, instead of glancing sideways, I should never have known anything about how they carried out the robbery."

A small, white hand passed over the forehead of the young man, as Lethia Ford leaned forward, in her eagerness to hear all.

"Did the last blow knock you senseless?" asked the detective.

"Yes. I knew nothing more till I found myself in bed here, with the doctor holding some strong medicine to my nose, and uncle and Lethia by his side. But I am all right now. I want to get up and help you to get that bag. It's got to be returned to Uncle Stephen, or he never will believe in me."

"Don't be a fool, Paul!" snorted the old man. "How could you help being knocked down in the dark? It's my fault. I ought to have had men there to look after you.

You had told me you were coming with the jewelry, and I might have known some of the sharp crooks in New York would find it out. They always do, somehow."

"How do you think they found it out?" queried Nick Carter.

"An inside job," remarked a quiet voice behind them. The detective swung around and saw a tall, well-dressed young man, with a studious aspect, looking thoughtfully at Clayton.

"This is Mr. Leonard Payne, my secretary," explained Reed. He completed the introduction: "Mr. Nicholas Carter."

The detective and Payne shook hands, and in that flash of time Nick Carter decided that Leonard Payne could be trusted.

"Well, there is nothing more for me to do here," observed Nick, after a vain effort to extract further information from Clayton. "I am going downtown again, Mr. Reed. I will let you know as soon as I learn anything."

"You expect to do so?" asked the millionaire.

"I mean to do so," smiled Nick. "Come on, Patsy!"

Once outside the grounds, Nick Carter dropped his careless manner, that he had adopted purposely while in the house, and gripped Patsy by the arm.

"Patsy, this is a case that will take all our wits!"

"Most of 'em do," was Patsy Garvan's dry rejoinder. "But it gave me a jolt to find that John Garrison Rayne was in this. It looks as if there is not a prison strong enough to hold that scalawag."

"I think there is. When I get him this time, I have no fear of his getting out again."

The taxicab had been waiting, and, as Nick followed Patsy into the vehicle, he told the chauffeur to drive to police headquarters.

"All right, Mr. Carter. Headquarters it is," was the cheerful response of the driver.

"I should like to know whether Chick and Danny Maloney have got home," remarked Nick, as they bowled along. "They ought to be—!"

The cab gave a sharp swing over to the left, and the wheels skidded dangerously on the asphalt.

Nick Carter and Patsy were thrown together with a jolt, and the driver, after a moment of frantic uncertainty as to whether he would smash into a tree or not, brought the machine to a stop.

"What's the trouble?" demanded Patsy, leaping out.

"Skidded," answered the driver laconically.

"Gee! You don't need to hand me that. I thought we'd keep on till we dived into the Hudson River. I meant why did you skid?"

Before the driver could reply, Patsy Garvan had found an answer for himself. A man, all huddled up, lay close to the curb, where the shadow of the trees kept him out of the casual view.

The chauffeur had been driving his taxi close to the curb—to keep out of the way of joy riders who were liable at any moment to come surging along at sixty miles an hour.

Suddenly he saw this prostrate man, and it was only by quick manipulation of his wheel that he avoided running over him. Good luck was the main factor in saving his cab from a bad collision on the other side of the road.

Patsy bent down and pulled the man partly over, so that his face was upward.

"Heavens!" muttered Patsy. "It can't be!"

He dragged his flash light from his pocket and turned it on the man's face.

A gasping sob broke from Patsy's lips:

"Chick!"

Nick Carter was by the side of his two assistants in an instant.

"Keep your light on him," he ordered.

As Patsy obeyed, Nick passed his hand rapidly over Chick's head and body, and a low expression of thankfulness broke from him.

"Nothing serious!" was his verdict.

"It ain't?" cried Patsy incredulously. "When he's lying here as if he were dead! Gee! It's serious enough for me."

"Keep quiet! You know what I mean. I spoke only comparatively."

The detective took from his pocket medicine case a bottle containing some restorative and forced a little down Chick's throat, while Patsy, at his orders, chafed the cold hands.

"He's had a shock, but there are no very bad marks on him," observed Nick.

"Looks as if he had had a fall," suggested Patsy.

"That's it exactly. I have it! He has been thrown from a motor car. Now, let me see!" went on Nick thoughtfully. "He was in my big car, with Danny driving; and they were coming home. He must have seen something on the road that made him suspicious—perhaps the gang that had robbed Clayton."

"Gee! You are great on figuring out things," murmured Patsy.

"It would be Chick's natural impulse to jump for them at once, regardless of whether it would be dangerous to himself or not. That accounts for it. Danny didn't stop the car—perhaps didn't notice anything—and Chick dived out. He missed his footing, and came down hard in the roadway. His head struck the sharp edge of the curb—here is the mark, up in his hair—and there you are! Danny would have driven on without missing him. Help me to lift him into the cab, both of you!"

Patsy and the chauffeur lent willing hands, and the three of them carried the still dazed, but not quite unconscious, Chick, into the taxicab.

"Now get to police headquarters as soon as you can," was Nick's order to the driver.

"The mix-up is getting worse as we go on," observed Patsy, with a sober shake of the head.

"It will soon be straightened out, though, Patsy, or I'm much mistaken," was Nick Carter's response. "It begins to look rather clear to me."

"It does?" grunted Patsy incredulously. "Well, for my part, I feel as if I were staring at a brick wall."

CHAPTER V.

IN THE RECORDS.

Chick had hardly recovered full consciousness when he found himself going up the steps of police headquarters, with Nick Carter supporting him on one side and Patsy on the other.

"How do you feel, Chick?" asked Patsy.

"I'll be all right when I have sat down a while to think it over," was the response. "My ideas are beginning to come back."

Nick Carter made no comment, although it pleased him very much to hear that his principal assistant was likely to be able to help him in the problem which had taken such queer ramifications.

Five minutes afterward, all three were seated in the private office of Inspector Jacobs, who had charge of the identification bureau at headquarters.

"Well, Carter," said Inspector Jacobs, "it won't be hard to place your finger prints if we have any record of them here. Let me have a look at that collar and paper."

Jacobs was a tall, wiry man, with deep-set eyes and a stern jaw. He was one of the several men in the police department who were credited with what is known as a "camera eye"—that is to say, an eye that never forgot a face upon which it once had rested.

Nick Carter laid before him the paper on which there were two finger prints. Jacobs inspected them closely.

"Roberts!" he called out to a man in uniform in the outer office. "Bring me number forty-nine."

The uniformed man went to a cabinet in the outer room and brought to his superior a large volume, inclosed in heavy boards, with burlap covering.

Inspector Jacobs opened the book and ran rapidly over its pages until he came to a certain one. It was covered with blotches of ink that close inspection revealed as impressions of finger tips.

"Here's where we get action!" muttered Patsy.

The inspector compared the blotches in his book with those on the paper belonging to Nick Carter, and then, having nodded contentedly, he looked at the finger print in oil on the white collar.

Nick did not ask Jacobs what he thought. He was content to wait till the inspector passed the book to him, together with the scrap of paper and the collar.

Jacobs was a man of very few words. He was known as the most taciturn official at headquarters. But there was no mistaking his meaning in passing the book and other exhibits to Carter.

The detective compared the finger prints, at first with the naked eye, and then with the aid of the magnifying glass.

He was as deliberate as the inspector, but when he had finished his examination of the blotches, he had quite made up his mind.

"The prints are identical, inspector," he said.

"I know it!" was the gruff reply

"Well?"

"Well?"

"The number is 5437," remarked Nick.

"That's right."

Inspector Jacobs, still with that air of intense wisdom which generally graced him and which made ordinary people afraid to go near him sometimes, reached for a smaller volume in his open safe, and flipped it open on his desk.

"John Garrison Rayne, known as the Apache. Dated December, 1900," he read.

Nick Carter did not say anything for nearly a minute. This did not disturb Inspector Jacobs. That worthy officer could maintain silence quite as long as any visitor —when there was no actual reason for its being broken.

Some of the men around headquarters said he could have kept the Sphinx guessing.

He quietly shut his book and returned it to the safe, closing the door and turning the handle to lock it.

"Do you know where Rayne is, inspector?"

"He isn't in New York. That's all I can tell you about him," was the reply.

Nick made no comment, but held up the blue cravat.

"Here's another," he said. "On this necktie. It's a little dim, but I guess you can make it out."

Inspector Jacobs emitted a pair of distinct chuckles, like the opening of two pop bottles.

"I don't need to look very far, Carter," he replied. "That necktie belongs to Slimmy Jordan. I saw it on him two days ago, when he was picked up by one of my men and brought here for a talk. We didn't get anything out of him, and I let him go. But I can swear to that necktie."

Nick Carter's eyes glistened. He was beginning to round up the gang he wanted so easily that he believed he could see the end of his task very close.

"That's all right about the necktie," he replied, hiding his satisfaction. "But Slimmy isn't the only one that has handled it. Did you look at the prints?"

Inspector Jacobs studied several hardly discernible marks of fingers on the glistening satin, holding his magnifying glass before it and turning upon the article a powerful light, with a reflector, that brought out every thread of the fabric itself, and made the finger prints stand forth almost as if they had been pasted on.

"One of these I don't know," he confessed, after a few minutes of concentration. "The other is—— Roberts!" he called out.

Roberts stepped into the room, and saluted.

"Yes, inspector?"

"Bring Number Thirty-eight B."

The volume was placed before him, and he went through the same performance that he had before, until he was sure he had identified the prints on the necktie as made by the same finger tip that had been compelled to produce them in this book of fate.

He consulted his index, from the safe—having to open that receptacle, with considerable difficulty, before he could do it.

"Butch Brown!" he announced briefly.

"Just what I thought," came from Nick Carter.

Chick suddenly got up from his chair. He had been sitting, with his head down, as if he hardly comprehended what had been going on around him. Now his manner had changed.

It was evident to Nick that his first assistant was not entirely himself. On the other hand, there was a wild look of cunning in his eyes which suggested that his brain was working rapidly, even if somewhat erratically.

"What's the matter, Chick?" demanded Patsy, rather anxiously.

"Nothing's the matter," rejoined Chick. "Only you are wasting a lot of time with your finger prints and books of records to find out something that I could have told you at first, if you'd asked me."

"What is it?" asked Nick.

"Just this," came the swift answer, "the three holdups who pitched me out of their car, and who had the Reed jewelry with them, were Butch Brown, Mosey Rovinsky, and Slimmy Jordan."

Chick almost shouted this, and his eyes glared angrily. Then he seemed to collapse, as he sank back into his chair. His eyes became dull, and he appeared to lose interest once more.

Patsy bent over Chick, while Nick Carter, after satisfying himself that his assistant was only temporarily overcome by excitement, and would soon recover, turned to Inspector Jacobs.

"Thank you, inspector!" he said quietly. "Chick has confirmed what I felt sure was the case from the first. This raid was planned by John Garrison Rayne, and carried out by the Butch Brown gang."

Jacobs nodded wearily. Outrages of this sort were such an old story to him.

"Rayne is not in this city, Carter!" he remarked, in a tone of finality. "Else I should say you are quite right."

"Then how do you account for his finger prints on this collar?" asked the detective impatiently.

"I don't account for them," replied Jacobs. "You see, Carter," he continued, with the ghost of a smile that seemed slightly to crack the parchmentlike skin of his face, "this is not my case. If the Apache is in San Juan and New York all at the same time, that is something for you to puzzle out. I don't envy you your job."

"I was going to ask you for a little help, perhaps."

"Anything I can do, of course," murmured Jacobs. "But I don't think you need any of my men to assist you in probing this. I've never flattered myself that I had a man in my department who could give pointers in that line to Nicholas Carter."

"And that's a cinch," interjected Patsy.

"I don't ask you for one of your detective force, inspector," explained Nick. "But I believe the gang have an idea that I am after them, and there may be some rough-house work before I get them all in."

"That so? All right! Just let me know how many men you want, and when. You shall have all you like. I have been thinking of taking in Butch, but I want to catch him with the goods. It makes me tired to corral these crooks, and then, after all the bother of locking them up and giving them the 'third,' to have the magistrate discharge them, because we haven't proved our case. I hope this case of yours will land Butch and his gang for ten or fifteen years."

Inspector Jacobs almost became excited as he stated his grievance. It was one of the few things that, to use his own expression, "got his goat!"

Nick Carter arranged to telephone headquarters when he wanted men, and Jacobs promised him as many as he might want.

Nick Carter said "good night!" and turned to go.

"Come on, Patsy! Help Chick down to the cab."

"I don't need any help," insisted Chick indignantly. "I'm better now."

To prove it, he ran down the stairs, instead of waiting for the elevator, and was out to the street nearly a minute before Nick and Patsy.

"Gee! You can't kill Chick!" remarked his admiring comrade. "Being chucked out of a car on his head don't faze him. All the same, we'll get even with those thugs for hurting him."

He went down the steps of the building and looked over toward the waiting taxicab.

The next moment he dashed over and peered into the vehicle. Then he gazed anxiously around, and ran to the corner to look up and down the street.

"Suffering snakes!"

"What is it, Patsy?" called out Nick Carter, from the steps.

"Where's Chick?" shouted Patsy.

"In the cab, isn't he?"

"No. What's more, I can't see him anywhere about. Gee! You don't think he's gone dotty, and is going to drown himself, or something?"

Nick Carter uttered a derisive laugh, although his anxiety evinced itself in his strained tones.

"Chick would never do that, even if he were crazy," he replied positively. "But he may have gone to try and find that gang by himself. The blow on his head has jumbled his ideas a little, and it is quite possible that he has undertaken the job without any help. He may have forgotten we are with him."

"I don't believe it," declared Patsy stoutly. "He had all his senses about him when he spoke to me just now."

"We shall see," was all Nick Carter replied, as he gazed about. "You run up the street, and I'll go the other way. He can't have got very far."

They separated, and for ten minutes looked all about the neighborhood.

There were no signs of Chick, however. He had been swallowed up in the crowd just as so many others are every day in a great city.

"What do you make of it, chief?" asked Patsy, when they met again in front of the headquarters building.

"Looks as if you are right, Patsy."

"Sure I'm right. But what are we going to do about it? That's the question. We've got to find him."

"Yes, we've got to find him," assented Nick. "And the best way to do that will be to go home first, and lay out a plan. We can't expect to see him around here. He's gone, and we'll have to hunt him and the Butch gang together."

"It's past one o'clock, chief. I don't like to let him go all night."

"Didn't you ever hear of Chick being out all night?" smiled Nick. "He knows New York, and it is probable he has some well-defined plan in his mind. So long as you think he is not still under the influence of that injury, and that he knows what he is about——"

"I'd bet a year's salary on that," put in Patsy.

"Very well! Then we'll go home and sleep on it. Early in the morning I am going after the Butch Brown gang and John Garrison Rayne. Incidentally, I have no doubt that we shall run across Chick."

"You take it mighty easy," grumbled Patsy. "I don't believe I'll be able to sleep."

But Patsy was wrong about this—as his chief knew he was.

The taxicab sped uptown to Madison Avenue, and deposited Nick Carter and Patsy safely in their home.

Ten minutes after the taxi had departed, Patsy Garvan was snoring comfortably in bed. Seemingly he had forgotten all the troubles both of Chick and himself.

But Nick Carter did not go to bed. He sat in his library, poring over a dirty, ill-written note, in an equally dirty envelope, which had been left for him, in his absence, by a regular, uniformed messenger boy of the A. D. T.

It read:

"Mister Carter: Go to park way uptown eight o'clock and git joolry."

There was no signature, and the words had been

scrawled with a hard pencil, so that the marks were very faint.

Not until he had looked at this cryptic missive for an hour did Nick Carter at last place it carefully between the pages of his notebook, and, with a thoughtful air, go slowly up to bed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "SQUEALER."

Even when in bed, the detective did not go to sleep at once.

It was a rule with him to drop all business as soon as he lay down, and to take full advantage of the hours of rest at his disposal.

But he broke his rule to some extent now, and it was not until he had quite decided what to do on the morrow, that he dismissed the Reed jewelry case from his mind, and dropped into the steady sleep of a vigorous man, mentally and physically.

The park uptown was doubtless Van Cortlandt, and the advice to go there at eight o'clock to get the jewelry of course referred to a meeting of some of the gang in the neighborhood of the park.

This much Nick had deduced from the dirty note sent to him.

It might be thought that so experienced a detective as Nick Carter would view askance an anonymous message of this kind.

Evidently written by an illiterate person, who had so little regard for the common decencies that he did not even take the trouble to procure a clean piece of paper, it would have been the impulse of many men to dismiss the whole thing as unworthy of attention.

But, because Nick Carter was an experienced detective, he felt that this sordidly presented information might be sound.

It was easy enough to understand why the message was sent. Some rascal had "snitched" on his pals. He had been ill treated by them—or thought he had—and the way to get even, of course, was to "squeal."

"Nothing been heard of Chick, I suppose?" was Patsy's morning greeting to his chief, as they met in the library, after breakfast. "He hasn't come home."

Nick Carter was disturbed, but he did not allow himself to show it. He had secretly hoped that Chick would be in his room by this time.

"If he is on the heels of those fellows, Patsy, it is not to be expected that he would leave them just for the sake of coming home to bed," he remarked. "You know Chick!"

"You bet I know him! And if he hadn't been slugged, I wouldn't be worried. I tell you, he didn't look right when we went downstairs at headquarters last night. I have an idea he is wandering around, without knowing what he is doing."

"If that were the case, some of the police are likely to have picked him up. Call up headquarters and find out."

But police headquarters had nothing to tell. Chick had not been found by the police.

For the remainder of the day, Nick Carter and Patsy were both busy. They found out by telephone that Paul Clayton was better, but still unfit to be moved, and that Lethia Ford was constantly in attendance on him.

The detective had a short conversation with Stephen Reed, assuring him that he expected to have some news for him the next day. Also, he told the millionaire, in response to an offer of the services of his secretary, Leonard Payne, that he might be glad to call on him later.

The anonymous message was continually in Nick Carter's mind. Who had sent it he never found out. He called up the central office of the A. D. T., but they could not tell anything except that some man had come in with the letter and asked to have it delivered to Mr. Carter. He had paid for it, and said there would be no answer.

"H'm! That's all I expected," muttered the detective, as he turned away from the telephone.

There were other things he might have done—some of which perhaps would have led him to the present whereabouts of Butch Brown.

But he decided that it would be wiser to await the result of his visit to the park uptown at night before he made any move. He did not want to alarm the cunning Butch unnecessarily.

The day passed away without any particular incident. Nick Carter was waiting for evening.

All day long he hoped to hear something from Chick.

"If he does not turn up to-morrow, I shall give up everything else to look for him," decided the detective.

It was a little after six when Nick and Patsy boarded a subway express and were carried uptown with the rush-hour crowd.

They got out at the Van Cortlandt Park station, and went into a news store close by. The proprietor knew Nick Carter, and was glad to be of any service he could to the eminent detective.

He gave Nick and Patsy chairs in a corner of the store where they could command the street.

Hardly were they seated, when a pale, peaked-looking young man, hardly out of his teens, in the cheap, flashy clothes of the gangster, and with a cigarette hanging from one corner of his drooping mouth, came shambling across the avenue and stood outside the news store as if he were waiting for some one.

He had been hiding in the shadow of an elevated-railroad pillar, and his fishy eyes had rested upon Nick Carter as he came out of the station, for an instant, with something that was almost intelligence.

Three times the pale young man strolled up and down the distance of a block, furtively examining everybody who passed, and peering into the doorways and windows.

"Here's where I throw the hooks into them!" he snarled. "They ain't going to put nothing over on me. Neither Butch nor no one else."

He bent over the tray containing evening papers, at the door of the store, as if about to buy one. Then, after a sidelong glance up and down, he seemed to melt into the doorway.

His method of entering the store was essentially that of the sneak thief. One could not say that he slipped, shuffled, or walked in. His movement was a sly mixture of all three.

"Gimme a pack o' cigarettes?"

While the proprietor was reaching into the case on the counter, the young man backed away a little until he could see Nick Carter.

Out of the corner of his mouth he mumbled:

"Ready, Mr. Carter?"

"Yes."

The detective had seen him come in, but did not recognize him until he spoke. The young man's real name was supposed to be Mitchell. He was usually spoken of as "Mitch." He had a number of aliases. He was an ex-member of the Butch Brown gang.

"I'll keep ahead," he went on, still cornerwise. "All you got to do is to see where I go. When I get to the place I'll stop and cough."

He took his cigarettes and paid for them. As he lighted one, it gave him an opportunity to stand closer to the detective and resume his instructions:

"They's a big empty lot, with a high board fence."

"All right, Mitch. Go on!"

Mitchell started, and choked on his cigarette smoke.

"Say, Mr. Carter!" he mumbled, in a tone that clearly expressed mortal terror.

"Well?"

"Cut that out, won't yer?"

"Cut what out?"

"What you jest said. No one knows me up here, perhaps. But you don't know who might hear yer. Don't call me by any name."

"All right."

"I didn't think you knowed me, anyhow."

Nick Carter only smiled.

"Of course, I might have knowed it, too. You get on to everything. Only I'm doing this for you as a friend, and I know you don't want to get me in wrong with nobody."

The pleading manner of Mitchell was piteous. He even turned around and looked the detective in the face.

"Go ahead, and show me the place," said Nick.

"And you won't mention no names?"

"Of course not."

"Nor your friend, neither?" he asked, nodding toward Patsy.

"I won't say a word, so long as you do the square thing," Patsy assured him.

"That's all right. I'm on the level," protested Mitch. "You'd better be!" rejoined Patsy. "If you ain't, why——"

"Of course I am. I wouldn't dare be nothing else, even if I wanted to. But I don't want to. Them guys over there have done me dirt, and I'm going to get hunk. That's all!"

There could be no doubt about Mitchell's thorough sincerity. He lighted a fresh cigarette, and continued, even more earnestly than before:

"I know very well that Butch would croak me if he knowed I was seeing you. So I have to keep my name out of it. That's what I'm telling you. All I can do is to show you where you can get them. Then I makes my get-away, and you does the rest."

"We'll attend to that part of it," said Nick, smiling grimly.

"There's only one thing more," went on Mitch. "I want you to soak 'em good. They've got the goods there, and you can get 'em. But you'll have to fight for 'em. They'll be four, anyhow. Maybe more. How many are you going to take to get 'em? You two might not be able to do it by yourselves."

"Don't trouble about that, Mitch," returned Nick Carter. "There will be all the help we want. I've looked after my business."

"Of course!" nodded Mitch. "You ain't no amateur. But I thought I'd mention it. Let me get out of the store first and walk along a little before you come. See?"

"Very well."

Mitch sidled out, his cigarette glowing, and shuffled off. The two detectives did not follow until a few moments later. But Patsy kept a steady eye on him through the window. He had not too much faith in Mr. Mitchell, notwithstanding his protestations.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HIGH BOARD FENCE.

"This is a dark street," remarked Patsy, as they turned a corner where their guide had gone. "Lot of new buildings, but some of them don't seem to be occupied."

"They soon will be," was Nick Carter's reply. "But, at present, there is plenty of open ground. So we don't get much light except from the street lamps. Where is Mitch?"

"In the next block. I can see him sneaking along against the houses. Wonder where he's going?"

"We'll soon find out."

"He's gone!" broke from Patsy in an excited whisper. "Shall I go and see into his game?"

"No. Keep quiet! Don't you see those men sauntering along below there? Two of them have just passed that street lamp, and—— Back, Patsy! Get back, I tell you!"

Nick Carter hastily shoved his assistant up the steps of a new apartment house, not yet tenanted, where they could look down the street, over the iron railings, without being seen.

"Gee! There's six of them! Do you suppose——"

"I don't suppose anything," interrupted Nick. "Only I don't want to be seen just yet."

"Well, this beats me!" muttered Patsy. "If that's the Butch Brown gang, why, I should think we ought to get busy."

"Mr. Carter!" whispered an excited voice, seemingly at the detective's feet.

"What do you want?" asked Nick in the same tone. "Come up here!"

"I can't," replied the whisperer.

"Blame my great-aunt's cat's tail!" blurted out Patsy. "What the——"

"Hush!" commanded his employer sternly. Then to the unseen person who had whispered, and whose voice both had recognized as belonging to Mitchell: "Why can't you come up?"

"They have a lookout at the corner. And there's some other guys I don't know mosejing about. I believe they're cops."

Mitchell had slipped into the basement of the house, and come around to the areaway. He realized that he was in a perilous position, and he shuddered so that his words could be hardly understood.

"You'd better stay down there till it's over," advised Nick.

"And if they get on to me, will you help to keep them off?"

"If I can. I don't think there is any danger. They'll have enough to do, without bothering you."

Nick Carter was sometimes obliged to use men of Mitchell's stripe, but he did not admire them. A traitor was a traitor, even if only against a set of rascals like the

Butch Brown gang, who, as enemies to society, must be brought down at any cost.

So the detective felt such a strong contempt for this sniveling rogue in the basement that he did not want to talk to him, much less stand by his side as a protector.

Mitch disappeared, to walk about the cellar, and hide, in case any of the gang should come down, and Nick, who had seen the six men strolling along the dark street move around a corner two blocks below, called out to him to come to the areaway again. Then he called again.

"What is it?" whispered Mitch, in response to the second call.

"Stay here, and tell me what I want to know," replied Nick. "You haven't shown me where the gang are."

"See that boarded-up place on the other side of the street, at the end of that new row of flats?"

"Yes."

"That's it."

"You mean the vacant lot?"

"Yes. The gang has taken the tool shed in there. The place they used to put tools in, but it's empty now. There's some barrels and boxes left by the men that was working on the flat houses, and they makes good places to hide anything. See?"

"Don't look likely to me," objected Patsy. "How did they know somebody else wouldn't get into the shed and get away with the stuff?"

A raucous chuckle of derision came from the pale lips of Mitch.

"Holy smoke! You don't think Butch ever left the shiners in there unless he was watching 'em, do you? He took that shed just as a place to look 'em over and divvy up with the rest of the gang."

"Wouldn't do it at the downtown joint?" put in Nick Carter carelessly. "The one in—er—Hester Street?"

"Naw!" interrupted Mitch. "You've got it wrong. It ain't Hester. It's Elizabeth, down near Mott. Over Galileo's saloon!"

"I meant to say Elizabeth," said Nick. "Of course! I was thinking Galileo's was the place, but the name of the street had slipped me for the moment."

"Oh, come off!" muttered Patsy to himself. "The idea of the chief letting anything slip away from him!"

Indeed, Nick Carter was not the man to suffer from lapses of memory. He had not been able to find out the headquarters of the Butch Brown gang, and he had been skillfully leading on Mitch to betray it.

He had said "Hester," in the hope that Mitch would do just what he did—give him the correct name. The additional information—that it was over Galileo's saloon, had been a piece of luck for which the detective hardly had hoped.

"How do they get into that vacant lot over there, Mitch?" he asked. "Through the flat house?"

"Naw! That's all locked up. They climb over on the other street. There's a place where it can be done dead easy. Butch has had some cleats nailed on the boards. They's covered with bills, so they don't show. The billposters never took the trouble to knock them off. Just pasted the paper right over them."

"Did Butch take all that trouble just for the meeting to-night? It don't seem worth the trouble. He could have gone somewhere else to divide up, I should think."

"Say, Mr. Carter, you've got the wrong dope altogether!" protested Mitch. "This tool shed has been used by the gang for more than two months. It's better than meeting downtown, where the cops might horn in. They ain't none of 'em got on to this."

Patsy had been staring down the street during this talk. He had seen at least three men appear at the corner, two blocks from where they stood, and nearly that distance from the boarding around the vacant lot, and had noticed that they always dodged away again quickly.

"I'd like to know what that means?" he thought. "I'll tell the chief when he gets through with this fellow."

"That will do, Mitch," said Nick. "You can go down there and wait till it's all over. To-morrow, if things go so that I know you have been telling the truth, you can come to my house and I'll pay you."

"Not on your life!" whispered Mitch hastily. "I wouldn't go to your house for a farm! Why, I wouldn't be a block away from it before some one would get me. That's why I didn't take the letter to you myself. There's always somebody watching your house. If I was to go there, I might as well plug myself with a bullet right away. It would come to the same thing."

There was no mistaking the reality of the terror with which the "squealer" said this. He was all in a cold perspiration at the very thought. It was too dark for Nick Carter to see his face. But the trembling voice told the tale plainly enough.

"Very well!" was Nick's response. "Call me up by telephone about noon. Then we'll arrange about it. I'm busy now."

Mitchell took the hint and dived into the cellar, while Nick Carter and Patsy went cautiously down the street, in the shadow of the empty houses, until they were immediately opposite the high board fence behind which Butch Brown was believed to be.

"Mr. Carter!" whispered a voice behind the detective.

"Well?" responded Nick, without turning.

"I have eight men here. When you want us we'll be there."

"Very well. You know what to do."

"Inspector Jacobs' orders were for us to act under your instructions."

"All right! That will do."

The man who had spoken looked like an ironworker, or something of the kind. His face was grimy, and he wore rough clothing and a blue flannel shirt. He had no coat. No one would have thought, from his appearance, that he was a policeman. But he was.

All this Patsy had observed when a fitful gleam from a distant street lamp shone upon him for a moment.

"This looks as if we'd have plenty of help, chief," was Patsy's comment.

"I don't know how strong the gang may be in numbers," returned Nick Carter coolly.

Suddenly, before Patsy realized what his chief intended to do, the famous detective shot down the side street, looking for the place where the cleats had been nailed to the boarding, as described by Mitchell.

Patsy was left behind for a second, but not longer.

When his employer moved so swiftly, and with every indication of a well-defined purpose, Patsy knew that, in his own language, something was due to cut loose.

"Here's the place!" whispered Nick, stopping at the darkest spot in the street. "I'm going over. Don't come up till I tell you."

"Gee! That's a tough proposition," grumbled Patsy.

Nick Carter took no notice of this protest. He knew Patsy would obey.

"Be ready!" he admonished.

"I sure will!"

"All right! No noise, mind!"

Putting one foot on a cleat, Nick Carter grasped another above his head and pulled himself upward.

To Patsy it appeared as if he were climbing up the smooth side of the boarding, without any help at all.

Almost immediately, Nick was at the top. Then his head above the edge, he peered over into the darkness.

"Patsy!"

"Yes?"

"Come up!"

"Like a bird!" responded Patsy, as Nick Carter lay along the top of the fence and went down inside.

CHAPTER VIII.

GANG AGAINST GANG.

Patsy had just got to the top of the high fence, and, following the example of his chief, lay along the edge, when a warning came, in Nick Carter's voice, to lie quite still.

Patsy did not reply. He did not know just what the situation inside might be, but he was satisfied that his employer had found out something.

For a few seconds there was no move on the part of either. At the end of that period Nick cautiously whispered:

"Slip over and come down. Don't show yourself any more than you can help above the top."

Patsy realized that, if he raised himself, his figure would stand forth in clear outline against whatever little light there might be in the sky. So he lay at full length and suffered himself to roll off.

He was too practiced an athlete to fall, however. As his body swung off the fence he caught the top with his strong fingers and hung at full length momentarily. Then he dropped lightly to the ground.

As he did so a hand was clapped over his mouth.

"Keep quiet!" whispered Nick Carter. "They're not far away."

"What do you want to hold my mouth for?" demanded Patsy inarticulately. "I know enough not to talk."

"Confound you! You're talking now!" whispered his employer fiercely. "Shut up!"

He released Patsy's mouth, and, taking his wrist, drew him gently across the rough ground of the lot.

The ground had never been smoothed since it was reclaimed from the waste land, and fenced in, so there were hills and holes all over.

Some thirty feet away was the tool house in which Nick expected to find the Butch Brown gang and the fortune in jewelry stolen from Stephen Reed.

"I see a faint light shining through the chinks," he said to himself. "This ought to be an easy capture, without troubling any of Jacobs' men. I'd rather do it myself, if I can."

"What did you say, chief?"

"Nothing. Get your revolver out. When the racket begins, I don't care how much noise you make."

"That will be a comfort," rejoined Patsy sardonically. "I've had to shut up so long I feel as if I had lockjaw."

Softly, the two stole up to the tool house. The door was fastened, and the one window had been carefully shuttered. With all these precautions, however, they could not hide the light inside altogether.

"Patsy!"

"Yes?"

"Put your shoulder against the door with me. When I say 'Go!' shove as hard as you can. We've got to get in at the first attack, or they may have a chance to hide the jewelry."

"We'll go through a-kiting!" replied Patsy. "And at the very first shove. Watch me!"

They were close to the door, when Nick Carter pulled Patsy away, and, with his hand over his assistant's mouth, to choke off any possible ejaculation, whispered:

"Listen!"

"I'm listening."

"Well?"

"I don't hear anything. What am I to listen for?"

"Hush!"

Nick Carter did not answer, but he strained his ears to catch a sound that he believed he had heard, but of which he was not positive.

For as long as half a minute, the eminent detective and Patsy stood there, as if they had been suddenly turned to stone.

"All right!" whispered Nick, at last. "I guess I didn't hear anything after all."

"Gee. When you get to hearing things that aren't there it's pretty near time to see a specialist," grunted Patsy. "You've been working too hard lately, chief."

Nick took his assistant by the two shoulders and shook him in mock resentment. Then he pulled him toward the door.

They put their shoulders against it, Nick whispered "Go!" and down went the door, with a splintering crash!

For a second there was silence. It was as if the sudden attack had taken away from those inside the power to think, while Nick and Patsy looked around anxiously for the Stephen Reed jewels.

Then with a yell, Butch Brown, who was facing Nick Carter, raised a brick from a pile in a corner, and hurled it with all his might at the detective's head.

It missed him by what seemed to be a hair's breadth. Nick closed with the ruffian, catching him around the waist in a grip that threatened to break his backbone.

"Get that sack over there, Patsy!" shouted Nick.

Three other men jumped for Patsy. Two of them were Slimmy Jordan and Mosey Rovinsky. The third was a fellow neither Patsy nor Nick knew.

Patsy fired his revolver at this stranger, but Slimmy knocked up the weapon and the bullet went into the roof. At the same instant one of the others struck Nick Carter's elbow, numbing his arm.

Whether this had been done for the purpose of making him let go of Butch Brown, or on general belligerent principles, Nick did not know. But the result was the escape of Butch.

Diving for the sack that lay almost at his feet, and which clinked significantly as it was touched, Butch swung it over his shoulder, and, without looking to right or left, dashed away.

Hardly was he out of the tool house, when nearly a dozen other ruffians came in, shouting and cursing.

Neither Nick Carter nor Patsy understood what this sudden invasion meant, until they saw that the newcomers were fighting with the three members of Butch Brown's gang who remained behind.

Then the experienced detective knew that two gangs had locked horns.

There were several pistol shots, none of which were effective, followed by a terrific onslaught with clubs and knives.

The three Butch Brown men were on the floor in an instant, and it was only on account of the narrow quarters that they were not clubbed to death at once.

"What's it all about, chief?" asked Patsy, through the deafening din and confusion.

Before Nick could reply, several other men came surging in, taking the side of the prostrate ruffians, and aiming vicious blows with clubs and knives at the heretofore victorious party.

Five men were on the floor by this time, and one, at least, seemed to be mortally wounded.

No need to tell Patsy what the trouble was all about now. He understood. It was a gang fight.

He and Nick had got to one side as the fight began. It was none of their quarrel. Besides, Nick Carter was seeking an opportunity to get out of the tool house and follow Butch Brown.

The rascal had the Stephen Reed jewels in the sack. The detective was quite sure of that.

"Come on, boys!" shouted one very tall, powerful man in a red sweater, and with hair of the hue of a well-burned brick. "Get 'em where they live! Where's that Butch? Hello, Slimmy! Get this, will you?"

He swung his huge, hairy fist at the face of Slimmy Jordan. If the blow had landed, the attenuated Slimmy must have been annihilated.

But victory is not always to the big and strong. Cunning counts for a great deal. In professional warfare it is called "military strategy." Used in a New York gang fight, it becomes "slickness" or "smoothness."

So Slimmy pretended to be scared out of his senses as the giant came for him—up to the second that the fist would have reached his face. Then he dodged under his assailant's arm, and the next instant, with a groan, the big man was lying across the floor of the tool house, mortally wounded.

A wan smile distorted Skimmy's clayey countenance for a moment. As he hid the blade of his knife in his sleeve, he tried to sneak out of the door.

He managed to get there just in time to have a pair of handcuffs clapped on his wrists, as a tall man, who revealed a detective's metal badge when his coat lapel swung aside, dragged him away into the darkness.

"Patsy!" whispered Nick, as he got close to his assistant. "Get out of this?"

But Patsy did not hear. He had just got into a duel with a husky ruffian of about his own weight and size, and was enjoying himself so much that he had no thought of anything else.

It was not until Patsy had landed a straight left, after a skillful feint with his right, and had sent his foe crashing to the floor on top of the big man killed by Slimmy Jordan, that he had time to look around.

Even then, Patsy was only searching for another enemy. He was well warmed up, and for the time being had forgotten everything except that he was in the ecstasy of a real scrap. It was a delight he had been longing for.

"Patsy!"

This time Nick Carter uttered the name with a sternness that could not be disregarded, especially as, at the same time, he seized his assistant's arm with a jerk.

"Oh! Hello, chief! Did you speak?" asked Patsy, backing away from the battle momentarily.

"Yes. Come away!"

"Come away?" was the amazed response. "Why, we haven't begun yet. And everything's coming our way. We'll knock out this whole gang, and the new ones who have just butted in, too. Where's Butch?"

"That's just it," returned Nick. "He's got away, and he's taken the Stephen Reed jewelry with him."

"Sure?"

"Of course I'm sure. I got it from some one who knows."

Patsy followed Nick Carter's glance, and saw that it rested on a thin, pale face outside the tool house, behind the ring of police in citizens' clothes who had been placed at Nick Carter's disposal by Inspector Jacobs, and who were closing in to round up all the members of both gangs.

The owner of the pale face was the informer, Mitchell.

"He saw Butch marching up the street, trying to hide the sack under his raincoat, and he rushed down here, taking chances on the police, to tell me," explained Nick Carter.

The battle still raged in the tool house—although not so fiercely as at first, because the police had arrested Mosey and several of the members of the invading gang. But reënforcements had come for the Butch Browns, and there were still enough combatants to make things lively.

Patsy was turning away regretfully, when, as he glanced across the vacant lot, he saw something that made him give vent to a yell of joy and dash away at full speed.

Nick Carter turned to see what it was. Then he, too, ran after Patsy.

Butch Brown was being led back, crestfallen and profane, by two men. One of his captors was a headquarters officer. The other was—Chick!

CHAPTER IX.

WHERE CHICK HAD BEEN.

"Here he is," were Chick's first words, as he saw Nick Carter and Patsy. "I've been after him since last night. He got away somehow, but I traced him up here from Galileo's. Then I lost him. Then I found him—with a sack of something hidden under his coat."

"The Reed jewels!" cried Nick Carter.

Chick appeared not to have heard this, for he continued steadily, as he bent an angry look on Butch.

"I made a grab at him, and I had him by the elbow, when another man rushed out of the darkness, snatched the bag away, and was gone before I had time to more than see who he was."

"You did see who he was?" asked Nick eagerly.

Again Chick did not seem to hear his chief. At least

he did not answer. Instead, he turned to the policeman, to ask if he could take care of the prisoner alone.

"Yes. I've got the handcuffs on him. He won't get away," was the officer's confident reply. "Besides, there's plenty of other officers here. That fight is about over, and we've got the gang where we want them."

Obviously, this was true. When Nick had withdrawn, to look after Butch Brown, he saw that the police had the upper hand, and that some of the gang were trying to sneak away.

What worried him was that the jewels, which had been almost recovered, should have got away, after all.

"You did not tell me who the man was who got the bag away from Butch Brown," he said, turning to Chick.

"I didn't want Butch to hear me speak his name," explained Chick. "The man was John Garrison Rayne!"

Nick Carter did not express any surprise, and even Patsy did not break out into one of his characteristic exclamations. Both of them had had a feeling that Rayne would appear in this matter again sooner or later. They did not forget that he had been in the attack on Paul Clayton in Stephen Reed's grounds.

It had been hard to account for his presence here, when he was supposed to be in Porto Rico. But, admitting that he was here, and that he was not represented by a double, the other things he had done were quite logical.

"Mr. Carter," said an officer at the detective's elbow. "We've got the situation in hand, and the patrol wagon is just coming up. Is there anything more you want us to do?"

Nick laughed.

"Hardly. If you've got the whole gang, as you seem to have, I guess that's about all. How many prisoners have you?"

"Seven. A lot of them got away. But we know who they are, and we'll pick them up later. You see, we didn't bargain for the Gas House Gang coming down here. But they've had it in for Butch Brown for a long time, and whenever he had a good thing, the Gas House men were pretty sure to go after him. The Butch Browns did the same thing to the Gas House outfit."

"I understand that. But what was the good thing Butch was supposed to have?" asked the detective.

"He had got hold of a bunch of swag somewhere, and meant to divide it up here in this old tool house with his pals. The Gas House gang had been after him hot-foot ever since they knew he was in the job, and there wasn't a safe place for him downtown."

"I see."

"That was all there was to it," went on the officer. "Butch came up here, with a few of his men, and the Gas Houses were on. Then, of course, there was a scrap, and I reckon about four of them are good for the morgue. The others we'll take to the station."

"Did you hear who got the stuff away from Butch Brown?" asked Nick.

"No. Butch Brown won't tell. Says he'll settle up with the man in his own way when he gets out."

"You are not going to let Butch out, are you?" put in Patsy.

"I hope not. But he may get bail, and that will mean he'll go after this other man right away."

"I'll see that he doesn't get bail," remarked Nick Carter quietly. "Ask the captain to hold him, anyhow, till he hears from Inspector Jacobs."

"Oh, he'll do that, all right," replied the officer. "Here's the patrol wagon."

Nick Carter, Patsy, and Chick left the vacant lot together, through a big opening that had been made in the fence, and through which the wagon had entered.

The detective knew there was plenty more work to be done on the case, and that it might be the most difficult part of the whole task.

"We'll go home first," he said. "Then we'll probably have to start out again, right away. I told Danny to have the car waiting near the park station of the subway."

Danny Maloney was there, with the big touring car, by the time Nick and his two assistants got to the station.

As most New Yorkers know, the subway becomes an elevated road before it gets to Van Cortlandt Park, and the car was drawn up in the shadow of the structure, so that it was hardly noticeable until one stood by its side.

Danny Maloney did not know exactly what had been going on. But it was a standing order of the chief's that he should never make himself conspicuous with the car, and Danny always obeyed orders.

"Now, tell us, Chick, where you went from headquarters last night, without telling us?" were Nick Carter's first words, as the car bowled smoothly away, on its journey downtown.

"You weren't dopey, were you?" asked Patsy.

"I don't think so," replied Chick slowly. "I was not quite so clear in my mind as I like to be, because I had had a hard knock when I was thrown out of that car. But I knew what I was about, and I intended fully getting into the taxi with you and the chief when I came down the stairs at headquarters."

"Go on."

"I had reached the steps when I saw a face in the light of a street lamp just across the street, and I rushed after the owner of it, without thinking about anything else."

"John Garrison Rayne?" asked Nick quietly.

"Yes. How did you know?"

"I didn't know. But I could not think of any other face that would be likely to draw you away like that. Did you see where he went?"

"Yes. But it did not help me very much. He walked over to Broadway and took a car uptown. He got off at Forty-second Street, went into the Hotel Supremacy, and strolled about the lobby for some time."

"Waiting for somebody?"

"I don't know. But I believe he had seen me shadowing him."

"Why?"

"I had been watching, dodging about behind pillars and things, to keep out of his sight. Just as I thought I had done this successfully, I happened to turn my head away for an instant, when a party came in from the opera. In that instant Rayne was gone!"

"Gone? Gee!" exclaimed Patsy. "Couldn't you pick him up again? He had not got out of the hotel, had he?"

"I suppose so. I didn't see him again there," confessed Chick. "Of course, I rushed to the front doorway. But Broadway at that time in the morning is

pretty well crowded, especially in Times Square. He may have gone out that way, or perhaps he used some of the other exits. There are a number of them, of one kind and another."

"And you lost him?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you come home?" queried Nick Carter. "There was nothing else to keep you."

"Yes, there was," corrected Chick. "While I was following Rayne—on the same car, of course—I kept an eye on him so closely that when a fellow got up to him and whispered, I was able to get what he said."

"Who was the fellow?" broke in Patsy, deeply interested.

"I don't know. He looked like thousands of other young men you may see in New York any night. He was well dressed, wore gloves, and had on a derby hat of the latest style. His collar was clean, and I saw a gold pin in his necktie."

"There is no regular uniform for crooks," observed Nick Carter. "It would be easier to spot them if they all wore distinctive clothes. The more a fellow of that kind looks like a respectable citizen, the more reason there is to be suspicious."

"This man said only one word to Rayne that I could catch," continued Chick. "That word was 'Galileo.' Of course, that was enough for me, when I found I had lost him."

"It ought to be," smiled Nick. "Well?"

"After trying to pick up Rayne around the hotel and Broadway for half an hour—going into other hotel lobbies and into the restaurants where there is an all-night license, I gave it up and took the subway for downtown."

"Went to Galileo's, I suppose?"

"Yes. The saloon was supposed to be closed. But I knew a way of getting into the back room, and I strolled in there as if I belonged to the crowd."

"They don't know you down there," remarked Nick. "It's a good thing. How did you account for yourself?"

Chick smiled.

"Told them I was from Chicago, new in the business, but I believed I would be able to make a raise in New York. To make good, I showed them a few things that put me in solid at once. I'm glad we have learned how to take a watch or lift a leather, and to pick a lock."

"That's part of a real detective's education," said Nick Carter. "You can't be expected to beat crooks unless you know all their game. Well?"

"I pinched Galileo's own watch before his very eyes without his knowing it, and had three wallets, besides, before I showed them what I had done. Then everything in the house was mine."

"What did you find out?" interrupted Nick. "That's the important thing."

"I found that Butch Brown and his gang were in a back room at the top of the house. I pretended to get drunk, and asked Galileo where I could sleep. He put me in a room on the second floor and left me—apparently dead to the world."

"Gee!" ejaculated Patsy. "I'd like to have been in that. Say, Chick, that was fine."

"When I'd been in my room about half an hour, and the whole house had quieted down, it was nearly four o'clock. I went up the stairs very softly, and got to the door of the room where Butch Brown and his men were. They were still talking. I tried the keyhole, but they had hung a coat, or something, over it. So I couldn't see in. But they had not bargained for their voices being heard that way."

"What did you hear?"

"I found that they meant to double cross Rayne. He had left the Reed jewels with them, to take somewhere downtown—I could not catch any name—and Rayne was to see Butch the next night——"

"You mean to-night?" threw in Nick.

"Yes. He was to see Butch then, and Butch was to produce all the money he had raised. Rayne was to give Butch and the others their bit out of it, take the rest, and make his get-away."

"A comfortable arrangement!" commented Nick. "Well?"

"That was all I heard. They whispered a little afterward. But I felt pretty sure that I had heard all the important part. So I went down to my room and settled down for a short nap."

"What did you do after your nap?"

Chick looked a little bit ashamed.

"To tell you the truth," he answered, "I didn't wake up till nearly noon. You see, that crack on the head had weakened me a little, and when I got to sleep I just let go of everything."

"You feel well now?"

"Splendid!" replied Chick.

"Then that's all we need care about. When you woke up, did you find Butch?"

"Later in the day I did. I never moved from Galileo's until Butch came in. There was nothing for me to go out for. Galileo's is as good a place for a breakfast and luncheon as any of the restaurants around there, and I stayed indoors and took what he provided—at a reasonable price."

"Gee! You make yourself at home anywhere, Chick!" grinned Patsy.

"I heard that Butch was coming up to a joint near Van Cortlandt Park, to divide the stuff he had. The gang were all afraid Rayne would come to Galileo's, and they thought they would be safe in that tool house."

"But Rayne found out where they were, eh?"

"Yes. Some fellow named Mitchell told him."

"Mitch?" cried Patsy. "Why, he's the fellow——"

"Never mind about that!" interrupted Nick Carter. "We are at home now, and I'm glad of it. Chick, you'd better get under the shower to freshen you up. Then you and Patsy both dress as sailors, and I'll do the same thing. The clothes you wore on board the ship going to San Juan will do. We may have to start out inside of an hour."

It was in less than an hour that Nick Carter and his two assistants gathered in the library.

All three appeared to be jack-tars of the saltiest description, judging by their dress.

CHAPTER X.

FINGER PRINTS AGAIN.

Nick Carter, while listening to Chick's narration in the motor car, had been considering a plan of action, and the plan was about completed in his mind when he reached home.

The fact that Chick had learned so much about Butch Brown and his intentions with regard to Rayne had helped Nick Carter considerably.

"We'll go and see if we can get the Reed jewels," he remarked, in an offhand way, when his two assistants joined him in the library, with their sailor toggery on.

"You know where they are, then?" asked Chick.

"I know where Rayne is likely to sell them," was his chief's reply. "He would want to turn them into cash quickly, and would have no time to pick and choose a purchaser. There is one man who always has plenty of cash and who will pay a good price when he does consent to do business with thieves."

"He doesn't always do it, then?" asked Patsy.

"Very seldom, I believe. That is how he has managed to keep out of the police net. We'll go and see him?"

"It's past twelve o'clock," remarked Chick. "He'll be open?"

"Much of his business is done late at night and early in the morning," replied Nick. "He is a money lender to people whom no one would suppose ever had occasion to ask accommodation. His customers have their names in the *Social Register,* as a rule."

"Where is his place?"

"I'll show you when we get there. We'll go down to Fourth Avenue and take a surface car."

They got off the car in Madison Avenue, far uptown, and turned into one of the cross streets.

It was at a very innocent-looking cigar-and-news store that Nick stopped.

Late as it was, the store was open, and three or four young men were hanging about. The presence of these youths was explained when it was seen that there was a pool room at the back.

The click of the balls, mingled with loud laughter, proclaimed that the games were still going on, and that the players were enjoying themselves more or less boisterously.

Behind the counter of the store was a rather ministerial sort of man, of fifty or so, who wore gold spectacles and seemed particular that his white cuffs should show neatly over his well-manicured hands.

"Stand outside till I call you," directed Nick Carter, as his two assistants were about to follow him in. "I'll talk to Mr. Leroy alone first."

Leroy was bending over the glass case on the counter, to serve one of the young men with a cigar, and he had not seen that anybody was coming in until Nick stood before him.

As Leroy looked up, he nodded and smiled.

"Good evening, Mr. Carter!"

The detective had perfect control of his features, and, although he was surprised that Leroy knew him, nothing appeared in his face to show it.

"Good evening, Mr. Leroy," was all he said.

The ministerial man beamed through his glasses on the young man who was buying the cigar, and continued to serve him with entire coolness.

"I shan't keep you more than a few moments, Mr. Carter," he purred. "Just till this gentleman has selected his cigar."

Leroy's voice was well modulated and his words carefully chosen. He was the essence of courtesy.

The detective watched him curiously as, without any sign of agitation, he picked out three boxes of cigars, one after the other, to give the rather fastidious young man his choice. Then, when a cigar was taken at last, he pointed to the gas jet, and proceeded to count out change for a one-dollar bill.

The customer moved into the pool room, with the other two youths, and Leroy looked up, smiling, into the face of the detective.

"I hear that the police captured nearly a dozen men belonging to two of the downtown gangs to-night, Mr. Carter," said Leroy calmly. "You were there, were you not?"

This taking the bull by the horns was a favorite method of Leroy's when he felt himself getting into a tight corner. The detective had heard that, and he understood the reason Leroy brought up this rather ticklish subject just now.

"Yes, I was there," replied Nick. "I am glad we managed to corral some of them."

"I suppose that accounts for your—your—rather unusual dress?" smiled Leroy insinuatingly. "You have not really become a sea captain, I suppose, Mr. Carter?"

"Only occasionally," laughed Nick. "I have a yacht, but my time is so taken up by other things, that I seldom have a chance to sail it. That picture on the lid of the cigar box you have just put in the case might have been copied from my boat. May I look at it?"

Leroy hesitated for the slightest appreciable period. He wondered what the detective was driving at. Then he opened the glass case and brought out the cigar box.

As he put it on top of the case, Nick Carter took a magnifying glass from his pocket and gazed at the cigar-box lid.

He seemed very much interested in the picture. But it might have been noticed by a close observer that his gaze wandered from it to the white cuff of Leroy, as the latter held the box for the detective to examine it. Indeed, the glass was more over the cuff than the picture.

"I have come for the Stephen Reed jewels," suddenly whispered Nick Carter, as he stared straight into the eyes of Mr. Leroy through the gold-rimmed spectacles. "And where is John Garrison Rayne?"

Leroy put the cigar box down quietly, and returned Nick Carter's gaze with an innocent stare.

"John Garrison Rayne—or whatever his name is—is not here, Mr. Carter."

"His finger prints are," said the detective sternly," as he pointed to the white cuff on the hand that held the cigar box.

Leroy's other hand was stealing down below the counter. But Nick reached over and grasped the wrist in time to prevent the pistol Leroy held from coming any higher.

"It won't do, Leroy. I've got you with the goods."

A quick wrench, and down went the revolver crashing to the floor at the back of the counter.

"This is an outrage," spluttered Leroy. "I have a police call right here. You have no more right than anybody else to come into my place and bluff me. If I pull this switch, there'll be a couple of officers from the station here in five minutes."

"Pull the switch, if you like. It will bring help for me. Though I don't think I need any. You'd better be quiet, unless you want to attract the attention of the

young men in the pool room. They would not take your side, if I told them what your real business is."

"That's only a little flyer on the side!" whined Leroy. "My business is newspapers, cigars, and pool tables."

"All right! But where is Rayne? He hasn't gone away from here yet, I know."

This was a bluff on the part of the detective. He did not know for certain. But he did not see how Rayne had had time to dispose of the jewels and get away. He surmised that the rascal was waiting for Leroy to close up his store before concluding his own business with that highly respectable-looking merchant.

"I don't know anything about Rayne, I tell you," insisted Leroy, trying to screw up his courage again.

"There is his finger mark on your cuff," answered the detective. "I looked at it through this magnifying glass, and I am familiar enough with it to recognize it at a glance. I'll make sure of it by comparing it with this."

Nick Carter took from a pocket the white collar and sheet of paper with finger prints on it that he had brought with him from Stephen Reed's home the night before.

"Wait a minute," requested Leroy. "It's time to close. I'll have my man over there in the pool room shut up the place. Then I'll talk to you. But I tell you, right now, you have made a mistake."

"We can soon correct it, if I have," was Nick's cool rejoinder.

In ten minutes Leroy's employee had turned out the customers, switched off the lights, except one over the counter, and, with a "Good night, Mr. Leroy!" taken his departure, evidently glad his long day's work was done.

Nick stepped to the door, ere the young man could close it, and beckoned to Chick and Patsy.

"Now, Mr. Leroy," said Nick Carter, as his two assistants stood by his side. "I should like to see John Garrison Rayne."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth, when the light went out, and they were all in pitch darkness.

Nick turned on his flash light, which he had had ready in anticipation of just what happened. But before he could do it, brief as the time was, Leroy had disappeared, without anything showing how or where he had gone!

CHAPTER XI.

HIS HEAD IN A TRAP.

Holding up his hand to his assistants, to warn them not to make any noise, Nick slipped around behind the counter and looked underneath.

A cupboard was there, the doors of which seemed to be fastened with a spring lock.

It did not take Nick Carter more than half a minute to open the lock with a small steel instrument he had in his jackknife. Then, as he swung the doors open, he saw another door in front of him.

This second door was not so easily opened. He discovered that it was of steel, varnished over to make it look like the oak of which the other part of the counter was fashioned. The lock was very intricate.

It was clear that here was a secret exit, ingeniously contrived so that Leroy had only had to stoop to be out of sight of any one in front of the counter, and going through the hidden doorway before a pursuer could get around.

"Come here!" whispered Nick, beckoning to his two assistants.

They hurried around the counter, and the detective pointed to the door of the second cupboard in silence. Both understood, without demanding any further explanation.

"Stairs?", whispered Chick.

"Must be," returned his chief. "I'll force the lock. Then you and Patsy come down right after me."

He selected a strong steel implement among those in his jackknife, and attacked the lock silently, but vigorously.

It was open in about a quarter of a minute. As Nick Carter had expected, there was a flight of steps in front of him—or, rather, a ladder.

He had got one foot on the ladder, when he heard a door close violently somewhere below.

Without hesitation, he jumped from the ladder into the darkness, came down, on his feet, on a stone flooring, and stumbled on, half bent, toward where he had heard the banging of the door.

Patsy and Chick were not far behind, although they had taken the precaution to descend three or four steps before jumping.

"Come on!" shouted Nick. "Help me break through here!"

The three put their shoulders against a door that Nick had found, and, with a vigorous shove, sent it crashing in.

They were just in time to see a man, with a sack in his arms, in the front areaway, pushing up the iron-railed top, as he climbed upward to the street.

"Stop!" thundered the detective.

The response was a derisive laugh. The man had managed to get half of his body through the opening to the sidewalk.

Bang!

Nick Carter fired his automatic revolver, and a bullet tore into the fleshy part of the fugitive's thigh.

With a mingled curse and groan, he dropped the bag to the areaway, and then, after a convulsive struggle to go up farther, came down himself.

"Grab that other one!" cried Nick, who seemed to be able to see on all sides at once. "Mind his gun!"

Chick and Patsy together leaped over to the left. As they did so, another revolver shot echoed through the cellar, followed by a screech of disgust.

"Naughty! Naughty!" shouted Patsy, as he seized the ministerial Leroy by the back of his coat collar.

"Hold him, Patsy!" admonished Chick.

"You bet I will. Get his gun!"

"I have it," was the prompt reply.

While Patsy and Chick held the struggling, cursing Leroy, Nick Carter was examining the contents of the bag with his flash light

"Are they all here?" he demanded of the helpless man at his feet.

"Yes. May the devil burn you!" was the reply. "You know that well enough."

"All right, Mr. John Garrison Rayne," was Nick Carter's response. "I believe this is the time we get you."

"You haven't got me yet," snarled the Apache.

"What shall we do with this one?" asked Patsy. "He tried to shoot me. I'd like to punch his head."

"Make him go up to the store. Keep behind, and if he tries to start anything, shoot him. I'll be responsible. If he behaves himself, it will be all the better for him."

"What can you do?" bellowed Leroy. "You haven't got anything on me, and you know it."

"If I take you to headquarters, you may find that somebody has something on you," retorted Nick. "Go up stairs and be good."

"What are you going to do?" asked Chick. "You can't carry that fellow by yourself, and he can't walk."

"There's a police call in the store," answered Nick. "It connects with the station. Just send in a call."

"We'll need the hurry-up wagon for that fellow," suggested Patsy.

"The call will bring the wagon, I guess. If it doesn't, we can soon have it here. Leave Chick with your man, and you come down after you've sent in the call."

The directions of the detective were quickly carried out. Leroy went up the steps with more docility than had seemed likely a few minutes before, and Patsy at once pulled the switch that would summon help from the police station.

While Chick and Patsy were summoning the police, Nick was peering into the sack with his flash, while an electric bulb he had discovered was throwing enough light on the wounded Rayne to enable him to watch the wounded crook.

"They are all here, so far as I can make out," was the pronouncement of Nick, after he had gone through the jewelry in the bag. "I find the sultan's pearls, the paper of unset diamonds, and all the pieces that I saw before. If there is anything missing, I'll make my friend here, Mr. Rayne, account for them."

"Everything is there," growled the Apache. "You haven't anything on me, anyhow."

"I think we have. If we hadn't, we could send you back to San Juan. They want you there for several things that would put you behind the bars for a few years. I don't know how you managed to escape from them——"

"And you never will know," laughed the rascal. "Those fellows down there couldn't hold me, any more than you can, Carter. You think you've got me now. But there's a difference between making a charge and proving it. You haven't even got a charge against me."

"What? With these stolen jewels right here, taken from you?" rejoined Nick. "You are very forgetful all at once."

"Hello, chief!" called down Patsy, from above. "Shall I come down?"

"No. Stay there and watch your man. I can attend to this one."

Nick had put the bag of jewelry on a packing case, and was bending over Rayne, preparing to tie up the wound in his leg, when he heard a slight noise behind that made him turn quickly.

"Well, if that isn't the last word in impudence!" ejaculated the detective, as he leaped to the front of the cellar and seized by the neck a thin, small young man, who was making for the areaway.

The thin young man clasped in his arms the bag containing the Stephen Reed jewelry. When he was swung around to the light, it could be seen that his face was that of—Mitch!

"What's this?" demanded Nick Carter, as he snatched the bag away with one hand and shook Mitch with the other. "What do you think you are going to do, eh?"

"I guess I'm going to jail now," was Mitch's resigned answer. "Well, I seen a chance, and I had to take it. You can't blame me. I'm built that way, Mr. Carter."

"If I let you go, will you try to behave yourself?" asked the detective.

"I can get a job shining shoes to-morrow," replied Mitch. "If you let me go, I'll take it."

"Get!"

As the detective shot out this one word, he propelled Mitch toward the areaway, and had the satisfaction of seeing him climb up and disappear.

"He may work for a day or two. Then, I suppose, he'll get back to stealing again," muttered Nick Carter. "Well, I owed him this one chance to make good. He's helped me to get John Garrison Rayne. That's worth something."

At this instant the sound of heavy wheels told him the patrol wagon was outside.

There was a scuffle, as several heavy-footed men came into the store, and Patsy's voice was heard telling them it was in the cellar that they were wanted.

"What is it, Leroy?" asked the lieutenant, who was in charge of the six members of the reserve squad he had brought with him. "Burglars?"

"No," answered Leroy, as calmly as he could. "A man came running in and hid in my cellar, and Mr. Carter caught him there."

"What Mr. Carter? Nicholas?"

"Yes."

The lieutenant whistled, and beckoning to three of his men, went to the cellar by the narrow opening pointed out to him by Leroy.

"I don't much like the door to your cellar, Mr. Leroy," remarked the lieutenant, as he dived under the counter. "It's too small altogether—awkward, too."

"I don't use it very much," answered the ministerial gentleman suavely.

When John Garrison Rayne was safely in the patrol wagon, handcuffed, and well guarded, Nick Carter, still carrying the precious bag, stopped a few moments in the store, to talk to Leroy.

"I'm not going to press the charge of receiving stolen goods," he said. "I could do it, and convict you. But, as you made nothing out of this, I'll let somebody else take the trouble to get you. Only one piece of advice I have to give; that is: Don't aim a gun at any of my men. If you do it again, I'll make you smoke. Understand?"

Leroy did understand, and he was exceedingly contrite as he promised not to do anything of the kind, no matter what the provocation.

Nick Carter smiled, and, accompanied by Patsy and Chick, went to the police station, to enter a formal charge against John Garrison Rayne of stealing a large amount of jewelry belonging to Mr. Stephen Reed.

In due course Rayne was put on trial and sent to Sing Sing for a long term. Among his fellow prisoners are Butch Brown, Slimmy Jordan, and Mosey Rovinsky, together with a miscellaneous assortment of other gangsters, who are in for more or less extended periods.

The jewelry in the bag was found to be intact, and when Nick Carter got up to Stephen Reed's home the next

afternoon, it gave him pleasure to see that Paul Clayton was well enough to hand the treasure to his uncle, just as he had intended to do before John Garrison Rayne, with the aid of the Butch Brown gang, had made one more attempt to get it away.

It was exactly a month from the day on which Paul Clayton was knocked down in the grounds of his uncle, Stephen Reed, when he led to the altar the beautiful girl who had been faithful to him through all his troubles—Lethia Ford.

It was one of the notable weddings of the year, and the society reporters never were more enthusiastic than in describing the impressive church ceremony, and the reception that followed.

Mr. Stephen Reed's gift to the bride was the famous sultan pearls, that had once been among the most precious possessions of Abdul Hamid himself.

Paul Clayton is now the active manager of the great shipping and banking firm of Reed, Clayton & Co., and there is not a more respected business man from Union Square to Bowling Green than this young man, who came so near, at one time, to being prosecuted for theft.

"I tell you what it is, chief," observed Patsy Garvan, on the day after the wedding. "If some of these old fellows like Stephen Reed, who let their tempers run away with them, would only stop to consider that most young men mean well, there wouldn't be so much fussing in this world."

"You put it in a queer way, Patsy," laughed Nick Carter. "But I believe your philosophy is sound."

"It's the best I have, anyhow," returned Patsy.

THE END.

"An Unsolved Mystery; or, Nick Carter's Government Case," will be the title of the long, complete story that you will find in the next issue, No. 145, of the NICK CARTER STORIES. As the title implies, the famous detective is called upon by the United States government to solve one of the greatest mysteries that ever confronted the men of the secret service. Throughout the story the action is rapid, and your interest will never flag. Of course, there will be the usual installment of the serial which is now running in the NICK CARTER STORIES, together with several interesting short articles.

HIS WIFE'S NAME.

The conjurer stepped forward to the front of the stage, and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, if there is in this audience any young man who would like to know the name of his future wife, and if that young man will kindly stand up, I will undertake to tell him."

Up jumped a young man in the center of the room.

"Thank you," said the conjurer. "Now, I always like to do business in a proper business fashion. Will you kindly give me your name?"

"Yes, certainly," said the young man. "My name is James Jackson."

"Thank you," replied the conjurer; "then the name of your future wife will be Mrs. Jackson."

Where's the Commandant?

By C. C. WADDELL.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 140 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XV.

SPURRED TO ACTION.

Detective Kruse strolled back to Grail and Sergeant Cato, and held out his hand for the book, which the adjutant gave up with some reluctance.

"Well," he observed, his smile a trifle supercilious, "I guess you found it just about as I told you, eh, captain? Nothing in the book that one could well call a clew?"

"Nothing, certainly, that tends to shed much light on the murder," assented Grail. "It seems just about as barren in that respect as all the other circumstances connected with the case."

"That's just exactly it." Kruse spoke resentfully. "I never saw a homicide job before where you couldn't get some kind of a lead. Why, just think of it! Here's a man murdered in a more or less public place, in the very heart of the city, at two o'clock in the afternoon, and the crime reported not more than half an hour later; yet we couldn't be more at a loss if it had been done a thousand years ago."

"The more I study the case," he went on knowingly, "the more I am inclined to believe it was his own people who turned the trick. In dealing with these Orientals, you never know what kind of a 'tong' or organization of highbinders you may be running up against, and they're deep—deep and crafty. Why, it would be just like a bunch of Japs to plan out a thing like this, simple as A B C on the face of it, but with no more chance to get on top of it than if it was a mountain of ice. Don't it strike you that way yourself, captain? Don't you think, too, that what we've got to look for in this case is a vendetta, or something of that kind?"

"I think that, first," Grail replied, "there are some more probable lines to be investigated. Now, this man, Matschka, I understand——"

"Oh, there's nothing to him," Kruse interrupted impatiently. "He left the house at six o'clock this morning, and we are satisfied he did not go back again."

"Still, that does not mean he could not have had a visitor who arrived after he had left," argued Grail.

The detective shrugged his shoulders. "How are you going to prove it?" he asked. "Nobody in the house saw any one going into or coming out of the room, and Matschka asserts that he had the only key to the door."

A sudden thought suggested itself to Grail. "You took a look at that room, of course, Mr. Kruse?" he said. "Can you give me a description of it?"

"Just an ordinary rooming-house layout," the other answered, a trifle shortly. "Bed, washstand, couple of chairs, table, and a closet with a few clothes in it."

"Anything on the table?"

"Not much. A match box, a bottle of ink, and a couple of pens. Oh, yes; there was a crumpled-up newspaper at one end!"

"A newspaper? Of what date?"

Kruse hesitated, flushing a trifle uncomfortably. "I don't see what difference——" he started to mutter; then broke

off with an expression of relief: "It was this morning's *Bee*," he declared.

"You are sure?"

"Certainly I remember noticing that cartoon of the mayor in the cowboy outfit."

"Then," asserted Grail, with conviction, "there can hardly be any question, can there, that some one was in that room after this fellow Matschka left at six o'clock?"

"Don't you see it?" he explained, as the detective only stared at him blankly. "Matschka never left that *Bee* there, for, as I happened to learn, he gets his morning paper at a stand around the corner, and he himself says that he did not go back to the room after leaving it. Consequently, the newspaper must have been left by some one who came in later."

Kruse whirled about sharply and started for the door. "By George!" he ejaculated. "That Matschka guy ain't out of this so easy as he thought. There's some questions that he's still got to answer."

But the army man laid a detaining hand on his shoulder. "Hold on," he urged. "I think there is a quicker way to get at what we want. Is the patrolman who was on post about the time of the murder anywhere around?"

"O'Brien? Sure. I can get him for you in two minutes."

"No need of that, I guess. Just ask him yourself whether he saw any of the men from Fort Denton down in that locality to-day."

CHAPTER XVI.

STRONG CLEWS.

The detective hurried off, to return in less time than he had allowed, with an affirmative answer.

"Yep," he said. "There was a slim, sandy-haired fellow in uniform, who got off a car about noon, and beat it down the street. O'Brien says he didn't watch where he went, but he is almost certain he saw the same fellow, although not in uniform, come along an hour or two later, with a bundle under his arm."

"Then that settles it," Grail announced decisively, "for the information tallies exactly with the suspicion I had already formed. There is only one man of that description who could have been absent from barracks to-day, and he is a deserter and a fugitive. I have reason to believe, too, that there was such friendship between him and Matschka as to make the latter's room the very place he would skulk to, to take off his uniform and plan his getaway. Probably he encountered Sasaku on coming out, and, suspecting that the Jap was spying on him, took swift vengeance. As to that, I cannot say definitely; but I am certain that the man you want for the murder is Private Simmons."

Kruse jerked a pad and pencil out of his pocket. "Private Simmons, eh?" he repeated excitedly. "Can you give me a description of him, captain? Or, no," he bethought himself, "I guess that isn't necessary. If he's a deserter, as you say, we must have one on file already. With that to go on, and provided he hasn't jumped town, we ought to have him run down in a couple of hours."

Grail gave a slightly quizzical smile. "Pretty quick work, that, isn't it?" he said, "considering that you've had the man down as wanted since noon, and he is still very much at large?"

"You've got me there, captain. I'll have to admit." The detective grinned a trifle abashed. "There's a sort of sneaking sympathy for a deserter, and even with the government reward, the boys won't exactly break their necks to get them. But this is different; you'll see a dragnet out now that a mouse would find it hard to break through. But here I am talking when I ought to be setting the wires to humming. See you later, gentlemen."

Grail stood watching him as he disappeared through the door, a trail of reporters in his wake, and a gleam of sarcasm flashed for a moment in the adjutant's eye.

"Lots of energy," he observed dryly, "but misdirected. I don't really think, Cato, that his boasted dragnet will succeed in catching anything. A single hook and line beats it, if you know just where to fish."

The sergeant nodded. "And you seem to be wise, sir, just where to make the cast," he said admiringly.

He hesitated an instant. "I promised not to ask any questions, captain," he ventured finally, "but I sure would like to know how you came to pick Simmons out so easily as the man who killed the Jap?"

"Simply by using my wits," Grail returned. "Since Sasaku was engaged in spying on this Russian crowd, the probabilities were all in favor of his having come to his death at their hands. The question then narrowed down to which one of them was directly responsible; and, as I had what I believed to be a full roster of their numbers, it resolved itself largely into a matter of elimination. Rezonoff, and one other, I put aside as unlikely, and the four men employed at the foundry were all at work.[1] In this dilemma, I naturally turned to a consideration of Simmons. His attempt on my life had already aroused my suspicion that he was in Rezonoff's pay, and, in addition, stamped him as desperate enough to go the limit. It therefore only remained to show that he was in the neighborhood, or had proper opportunity, to satisfy me that he was the assassin; and this link, Patrolman O'Brien's memory, and Simmons' own carelessness in leaving behind him the newspaper he had carried, were fortunately able to supply.

"Of course," he admitted, "that assumption might have broken down in a dozen places; but, as it happened, it held good, and convinced Kruse that he was up against something less fantastic than a Black Hand society. As a matter of fact, if he had only known it, there are no such organizations among the Japanese. They have not even a word in their language to express the idea. But, see," he broke off, "here comes Kruse back, fairly bristling with news of some sort. It can't possibly be that Simmons has been so careless as to let himself be captured?"

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE WAY.

His surmise was correct. The murderer, it developed, was still at large. Kruse, however, brushed that point aside with an indifferent wave of the hand.

"The important thing is that we had the job doped right, captain," he said, generously conceding a share of the laurels to Grail. "We are corroborated not only by the finding of Simmons' discarded uniform in an ash can a couple of blocks down the street, but also by the fact that Matschka and three of his pals down at the rooming house have beat it."

Grail glanced up sharply at the latter information.

"Matschka is gone, you say?" he repeated hoarsely. "And three others?"

The detective nodded. "Don't you worry about that, though, captain," he advised. "As I tell you, we've got the dragnet out now; we'll have the whole bunch run in before midnight." And again he bustled off to look after his arrangements.

Grail, however, clutching Cato by the arm, drew him hurriedly from the building.

"This means that I've simply got to do something," he muttered, as he went down the steps. "With the gang unquestionably gathering for action, I can't afford to risk further delay. Indeed, it may already be too late."

Nevertheless, he halted on reaching the sidewalk, and, leading his companion out of the passing crowds, stood gazing meditatively over toward the new courthouse in course of construction across the way.

It seemed to suggest an analogy to him.

"Cato," he said thoughtfully, "they are taking their time over that job, building it from the ground up; but in New York, where things have to be done with a rush, I have often seen the top story of a skyscraper finished, while the lower floors were still merely a network of iron beams and girders.

"And that's what I've got to do to-night," he continued. "I've got to tackle the finish of an enterprise before all my supports and buttresses are in place. I am hesitating now, too, sergeant, as to whether or not to ask for help from inside there." He gave a jerk of his head toward police headquarters. "I could get it with a word, no doubt, but that would mean certain publicity, and the possibility of grave international complications."

"Don't you do it, sir," Cato counseled earnestly. "If it's an army matter, let's handle it ourselves. There's two of us, isn't there?"

"It's two against six, though, Cato," Grail warned him, "and six who, for their own sakes, can afford to stop at nothing. You must understand, too, that if you associate yourself with me in this thing, and we fail, our action will be mistaken, and we shall be branded as traitors and deserters, and the memory of us held in contempt."

"You can't shake me by that kind of talk, captain," the sergeant returned lightly. "I still say, if it's an army matter, keep it to the army; and wherever you go, I want to trail along."

Grail bent a long, searching glance upon him; then, evidently satisfied, extended his hand to clasp that of the noncom in a hearty grip.

"Are you armed?" he asked quietly.

For answer, Cato merely patted a bulge under his coat on the left side, where a big service forty-four hung in its holster from around his neck.

"Have it ready for an easy draw, then," advised the adjutant. "It is more than likely you will have need to use it."

He seemed about to add something more, but just then a big clock overhead boomed out ten slow strokes.

"Come!" said Grail sharply. "Let us be on our way!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

TO THE RESCUE.

Hailing a taxi, Grail and his companion went rapidly north, almost to the extreme limits of the city; then, dismissing their vehicle, proceeded a short distance on foot to the river bank.

On the way the adjutant outlined his plans.

"There is an old night watchman at a tannery out here, who has a skiff that I've hired once or twice to go catfishing in," he said. "It's a patched-up, leaky old tub, but it will carry us across the river all right; and by starting at this distance upstream, we can avoid the labor and noise of rowing. The current will carry us silently down to the point on the other side that I've picked for a landing.

"Besides," he explained, "a move of this kind will throw off guard any one who might be attempting espionage over our actions. The natural expectation would be that we would use the bridge, or if for any reason we should choose the river, that we should strike directly across."

Cato considered a moment the width and rapidity of the muddy current; for by this time they had reached the skiff, chained to the bank, and were waiting for the old watchman to bring down the oars.

"We'll be carried pretty far below," he suggested.

"Exactly," Grail assented. "You see that farthest sand bar, which sticks out below the bridge?" He pointed down the long curve of the other shore; for although the new moon was close to the edge of the western horizon, it gave sufficient light to reveal the dark, low-lying projection he indicated. "Well, right this side of that is where I am planning to land."

"You think they still have the colonel down there in the bottoms, then?"

"Yes. My theory is that, having rushed him across the river, and back to the old shack hidden away there among the weeds, they would have waited for further action until they learned just how far their enterprise had succeeded in escaping detection. Savage and revengeful though Rezonoff may be, he is also cautious, as shown by the fact that he has taken weeks to work this thing up; hence it is unlikely that he would run any risks in the matter by undue haste. He would want first to discover what suspicions had been aroused, and the character of the search to be set afoot. Besides, he had to cover up his tracks by the return of the borrowed motor boat, and otherwise; and that we know was not accomplished until after dawn.

"Furthermore," he argued, "we have got to take the movements of the other members of the gang into consideration. Simmons, who was away from the post on leave until four o'clock this morning, no doubt assisted Rezonoff in securing and handling the motor boat, and with him received the bound and gagged body of the colonel when it was deposited on the other side of the fence, since it is certain that none of the four employees of the foundry left the inclosure. It was Vance's task to operate the crane, Pepernik's and Minowsky's to seize the colonel and jerk him into the basket, and Matschka's to cut off the lights; and after the undertaking was completed, they still kept on at work.

"Whether or not they went over to the bottoms after leaving the foundry I do not know, of course," he conceded, "but I think it unlikely that all of them did, since, as you will remember, I telephoned from the fort to Schilder's timekeeper, and found out that Vance and Matschka reported promptly at seven o'clock this morning, and that Minowsky came on about eight, Pepernik being the only one of the party who did not show up at all."

"Ah, I see." Cato, who had been closely following the argument, nodded his comprehension. "Matschka and Vance, you believe, did not go over at all; Minowsky re-

lieved Simmons, who had to go back to barracks, and helped Rezonoff return the motor boat; and Pepernik stayed on guard at the shack. Is that it?"

"Precisely," affirmed Grail; "and although I may be unduly optimistic, I doubt, on that very account, if any very serious evil has yet befallen the colonel. Had immediate measures been contemplated or taken, do you suppose any of those men would have stayed away from the other side of the river, or would have shown up quietly for work this morning? No; they would be taking advantage of the start afforded them to get away. Moreover," he asked, "why should Pepernik be playing sentinel over there, if there is nothing to guard?"

Cato scratched his chin. "Still, you've got to admit, sir," he urged, a trifle diffidently, "that a good deal of what you say is only surmise. How do we know, for instance, that Pepernik is really the——"

"Surmise?" interrupted Grail. "Of course it is surmise. How can it be anything else, until we get over there and learn just exactly what the actual situation is? In the meantime, though, since we have nothing to go on but surmise, we might as well make it as favorable as possible. Hope for the best and prepare for the worst, is a good rule in any sort of a campaign.

"Nor am I working as much on conjecture as you imagine," he added. "In my balloon flight I could make out plainly the path trampled through the tall weeds from the shore to the shack, over which the colonel was carried; and although I could not be certain from that height, I am pretty confident that I saw some one—this Pepernik probably—in the door of the hut."

"How on earth, then"—the sergeant stared at him—"did you keep from going right over there? It isn't like you to hold your fire, with the game in plain sight."

"It wasn't easy," Grail confessed grimly; "but this wasn't a one-man job—not in daylight, anyway. There were too many considerations at stake for me to risk bungling things by wading in alone; and there was no one at the fort whom I could call to my assistance. To-night, of course, I should have tackled it, even though you had not volunteered to go with me; but to go scouting around there before dark would have been only to spoil everything."

The old watchman appeared at this point, bringing the oars, and Cato, grabbing them from him, leaped impulsively into the boat, and prepared to shove off. But Grail still stood on the bank.

"Not for ten minutes yet." He glanced at his watch. "The moon is still forty minutes high, and it won't take us more than half an hour to make the crossing. I tell you, I haven't been holding myself down all day, sergeant, to give way to impatience now. It's got to be pitch black down in those bottoms before I take a chance, for it's a cinch that the other side will do nothing until midnight, or later."

The ten minutes elapsed, and Grail gave the word. With a few rapid strokes, Cato pulled out into the current; then, shipping his oars, went forward to keep a watch for snags and sand bars, leaving his companion to handle the tiller.

Swiftly the great stream bore them along, but just as swiftly the crescent moon was dropping down behind the chimneys and rooftops of the city, and by the time they shot between the piers of the great bridge, darkness had come.

CHAPTER XIX.

A TEMPORARY EXPEDIENT.

Cato broke the rather absorbed silence in which he had been sitting to glance back at the adjutant.

"You say you don't expect any move from the other people until midnight, or later, captain?" he inquired curiously, although in lowered tones. "What do you look for, then?"

"Removal of the colonel to a more secure hiding place," answered Grail. "The use of the shack, as I figure it, was only a temporary expedient, until they could see how the land lay, and what steps would be taken against them; for their coming and going to the bottoms would soon give rise to comment, or prying boys might cause them trouble. Consequently, Rezonoff would speedily arrange for a better prison house."

"Or else kill the 'old man,' and be done with it," muttered Cato darkly. "Fact is, sir, the more I think over what you've been telling me, the worse things look. If Rezonoff was out to get even with Colonel Vedant for something, why should he go to all this extra bother? Why wouldn't he simply knock the colonel on the head when he got him on board that motor boat, and drop him into the river?"

"Because that would not have fitted the Russian idea of revenge. Rezonoff would want his victim to suffer, would want to taunt and insult him, and try to make him quail—to play with him as a cat would with a mouse. Then, too, he has another object, remember. He may be hoping, by threats or false promises of freedom, to induce the colonel to divulge the secrets of the wireless experiments we have been making.

"No, no, Cato!" he added, with emphatic gesture. "I have thoroughly threshed out the question you raise, and am sure that the colonel is still alive. Indeed, I do not think they would have taken him away from the shack for two or three days yet, had not the murder of Sasaku and the suspicion directed toward Matschka forced their hands. The disappearance of the whole party from Brentford, however, convinces me that something is afoot to-night; and my one great fear is that, panic-stricken and anxious to get away, the crowd may get from under Rezonoff's control."

He dropped his voice now, for they were rapidly approaching the landing place he had selected, and Cato, clambering back from the bow, resumed his place at the oars.

With scarcely so much as a ripple in the water, the boat was headed in toward shore, and a moment later grounded silently against the bank.

CHAPTER XX.

AT THE SHACK.

"What's the program now, sir?" whispered Cato, as the two men disembarked, and drew the skiff up on the low, muddy shore.

"A bit of reconnoitering first," returned Grail; "for what will follow must depend largely on conditions, and the number of the enemy on hand. If there are only three or four of them at the shack, we might rush them successfully; or even against the whole six we might try the same tactics, provided the colonel is capable of fighting, and we saw a chance of setting him free and slipping a gun into his hand

with our first onset. The odds would be two to one, but that would be evened up to some extent by the surprise of our attack.

"As I say, though," he concluded, "the first thing is to find out just what we are up against. Come on."

And, leading the way, he pressed forward into the jungle-like thicket of horse weeds growing down almost to the water's edge.

For perhaps a hundred yards he proceeded upright, Cato following close in his footsteps, and their speed accelerated by the fact that they were able to pursue the trail broken by the other party the night before. But as they approached the shack, he gave a quick sign to his companion to crouch down; two men were standing not a dozen feet away from them in the little clearing which surrounded the hut.

Grail paused and listened eagerly to their conversation; but as he discovered, after a moment or two, that it was in a Russian dialect, incomprehensible alike to Cato and himself, he decided to continue his investigations.

Admonishing his companion with a nudge to follow his example, he wriggled cautiously away into the weeds, intending to make a wide circuit around the clearing, and approach the shack from the rear, where the undergrowth extended up almost to the walls.

At what he considered a safe distance, he started to rise to his feet again, so as to proceed more swiftly, but halted abruptly.

They had worked their way back almost to an apology for a road which ran through the bottoms at this point, and now, as Cato heard the adjutant's quick, warning indrawing of the breath, and followed the direction of the other's glance, he saw, just ahead of them, the outline of a big touring car, with the chauffeur nodding sleepily over the wheel.

Retreating a short distance into the thicket, the two took counsel together over this development.

"It couldn't have happened better if I had planned it," Grail whispered exultantly. "Don't you see, Cato, they are preparing to transfer the colonel to more secure quarters, just as I told you they would, and have brought the touring car here for that purpose? All we've got to do is to overpower that chauffeur, and let me, rigged out in his coat and cap, take his place. Then, with you hanging on behind, we have only to run the car up into the city and declare ourselves to see them vamose like frightened rats, and leave the colonel safe in our hands. Later we can take such steps to gather in the bunch as the war department may think best."

It was really about as feasible a scheme as could have been devised under the circumstances, and after a brief rehearsal the first part of it was noiselessly and successfully put into effect.

The chauffeur, who turned out to be Miller Vance, the crane operator at the foundry, finding himself suddenly between two assailants, who seemed to rise like specters out of the darkness, surrendered without so much as a murmur, and, divested of his coat and cap, was promptly tied up, gagged, and thrust out of the way into the bushes.

Then Grail, in his borrowed panoply, having climbed into the vacant place, while Cato concealed himself underneath the car, they settled down to wait.

For a long time nothing happened. The mists rose damp from the river, and gathered along the bottoms, an occasional breeze rustled the tall weeds, or a bird cheeped sleepily from its nest, but that was all. Not a sound came from the direction of the clearing.

Under the tension each slow-passing minute seemed an eternity to Grail. He could hardly believe it when a clock somewhere in the distance chimed twelve faint strokes, and he had to realize that it was only midnight.

Then suddenly the brooding silence was shattered by the muffled reverberation of two revolver shots, evidently from within the hut. Like a flash came the thought to Grail that the prisoner there was being done to death, and that the automobile was only on hand to convey the body to a convenient place of concealment.

Quicker than it takes to tell it, he had sprung to the ground, and, with his revolver out, was tearing impetuously through the weeds, while Cato, worming himself out from under the body of the car, was pounding hard behind.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BAITED TRAP.

Neck and neck, Grail and the sergeant reached the edge of the clearing, and together dashed across it toward the closed door of the shack; but when within less than half a dozen feet from the goal, their feet simultaneously flew up, and both of them came sprawling to the ground. In their haste and with the darkness neither of them had noticed a cord stretched taut across their path.

Moreover, before either of them could recover himself, the hut door was flung open, and a quartet of burly forms rushed out to pile on top of them, tie them hard and fast, and carry them inside.

A tall, dark man, whom Grail readily recognized as Dabney, the pseudo real-estate operator, stepped forward, and flashed a lantern into their faces.

"Ah!" He showed his teeth in a satirical grin. "As I expected, it is our friend, Captain Grail, and the sergeant who was interested to-day in the brand of cigarettes smoked at the foundry."

He paused abruptly, as he took notice of the chauffeur's coat and cap worn by the adjutant.

"So-o!" He clicked his tongue in a long-drawn-out chuckle. "That was the idea, was it? Well, not a bad one," he granted. With a shrug of his shoulders, he gave a word of instruction to two of his subordinates, and they hurried out, to return shortly with the chagrined and raging Vance.

In the meantime the leader kept taunting his two prisoners with mocking gibes.

"You should learn more discretion, my dear captain," he bantered. "My little ruse of the two pistol shots should have made you wary, instead of reckless; for if they had been aimed at the colonel, he would have been dead and beyond your aid. However, as I reasoned would be the case, you did not stop to think. If there are any spies lurking about, I said to myself, these shots will bring them to light; and the result proved my assumption correct."

Grail made no answer. Of what avail to bandy words with his tormentor? It would only serve to increase the other's sense of triumph.

Their captor, however, did not cease his gibes.

"As you may infer," he went on, "the colonel is not dead—yet. He is back there in the weeds, and as no doubt he would wish to see his most trusted officer and his faithful sergeant once more before all three of you take the long

journey, I have arranged a little comedy surprise which I think will not fail to be appreciated on both sides."

He issued a word or two of directions to his men, for by this time Vance had been brought back and the party was complete; and immediately Grail and Cato were bundled out, and seated on a bench outside the door, their fastenings so arranged that movement of any kind was impossible, and a gag forced into their mouths. There, between them and on each side, three members of the gang took their places.

At first the prisoners failed to understand the meaning of these elaborate preparations; but presently, when the colonel appeared, being dragged across the clearing by two of his captors, the hideous truth flashed upon Grail.

With the bonds of Cato and himself concealed from view, and the three ruffians seated beside them apparently engaged in friendly conversation, the scene was cunningly staged in the flickering lantern light to present the two soldiers as members of the conspiracy.

Certainly Colonel Vedant was deceived. His attention cleverly directed toward the group on the bench, he halted about halfway across the clearing, his eyes fixed incredulously on the face of his adjutant.

Grail's coat collar was turned up about his chin to hide the silencing gag across his lips; but there was no possibility for the colonel to mistake that broad sweep of forehead, with the dark hair waving back from it, the long, straight nose, or that peculiar distinguishing arch to the eyebrows.

For a full half minute the old man stared in silence; then, in a blaze of scornful indignation, he burst out hoarsely with the one word "Traitor!" and, turning his head, marched proudly off between his guards.

"Also," Rezonoff bent over to whisper in Grail's ear, "he will go down to his grave believing it the truth."

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SNAKE CHARMING.

It may be stated positively that snakes said to be charmed are not drugged nor electrified. Neither are they hypnotized, for no human being ever yet existed able to hypnotize or mesmerize a snake of any species whatsoever, or to affect it in any way by what the gullible public is pleased to call the "power of the human eye."

Neither are their fangs cut out, for the snakes used are nearly always of a harmless species, and have no more venomous power than a rat or a pigeon. They are for the most part boas—boa constrictors—from South America, of all snakes the most gentle and tractable in disposition. Any one can take up a boa, provided he acts gently, and with a slight knowledge of the animal's likes and dislikes.

There are things, however, which the boa will fiercely resent, and these the charmer knows and carefully avoids. For instance, should any one annoy a boa constrictor by puffing his breath strongly three or four times into the reptile's face, it will become so fierce that the charmer must put it away or suffer the consequences of a fierce paroxysm of hissing and biting rage, and a large boa's bite is not to be thought lightly of, for he has six rows of teeth, four in the upper jaw and two in the lower, all half an inch long, and as fine as needles.

The whole explanation of this "snake handling," which, by courtesy, is called "charming," is this—the charmer doesn't hurt the snakes. He doesn't frighten them. He does none of the things which he knows will anger them. Under such treatment all animals are docile.

The groom cannot do altogether as he likes with his horses, for there are actions which no horse will permit. Animals when treated according to their nature are tractable, and when contrary to it are rebellious, and snakes are no exception.

Some one may here ask, why do not large boas wrap themselves around the charmer and do a little strangling? The answer is that they do not press the charmer because the charmer does not hold them tightly.

If held forcibly by the neck, the giant serpent will soon exhibit his constricting powers, and, by enwrapping himself around neck and arms and body, will gradually tighten his coils until the grasp on his neck is released, when he will proceed to uncoil himself, after giving a fearful bite to the hand which had rudely detained him.

It may be stated for a certainty that no snake uses his constricting power in attack except in the act of taking his prey, and never in defense except when held as prisoner.

Many persons imagine that deadly snakes have a special mission to use their venom on human beings and that they are ever ready and anxious to do so. So far is this from being the case, that it might be stated as a rule that, except when much provoked, they are very slow and reluctant to bite. The accomplished charmer always chooses quiet snakes, and by handling them gently, escapes the danger to which he would be exposed with those of a more nervous disposition.

BROWN BABIES FOR BAIT

"Babies wanted for crocodile bait. Will be returned alive."

If newspapers abounded in Ceylon as much as crocodiles do, advertisements worded like the foregoing would be common in their want columns. As it is, the crocodile hunter has to secure his baby by personal solicitation. He is often successful, for Ceylon parents, as a rule, have unbounded confidence in the hunters, and will rent their babies out to be used as crocodile bait for a small consideration.

Ceylon crocodiles suffer greatly from ennui. They prefer to lie quite still, soothed by the sun's glittering rays, and while away their lazy lives in meditation. But when a brown infant with curling toes sits on a bank and blinks its eyes at them, they throw off their cloak of laziness and make their preparations for a delicate morsel of Ceylon baby humanity.

When the crocodile gets about half way up the bank, the hunter, concealed behind a jutting bowlder, opens up fire, and the hungry crocodile has his appetite and life taken away at the same time. The sportsman secures the skin and head of the crocodile, and the rest of the carcass the natives make use of.

This way of securing crocodiles might be objected to by American mothers. The American infant imagination might be shattered by the devouring gaze of a healthy saurian who hasn't had his dinner; but we are creditably informed that the average Ceylon infant displays a passive indifference to his advances, and that the only thing which frightens him is the report of the gun.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Lightning Bolt Fries Eggs in Hens' Nest.

On entering one of his henhouses, B. F. Moore, of Winsted, Conn., says he was puzzled on finding three fried eggs in a nest. He looked at his white Leghorns and discovered that the tails and wings of most of them were singed. Further investigation revealed the fact that a bolt of lightning had entered the house during a thunderstorm. There were forty hens in the building and none were killed.

War Sounds Knell of West's Broncho.

The European War promises to mark the final passing of the wild horse of the range, the disappearance of the bucking broncho so long associated with the West.

Even now there are practically no wild horses such as once roamed the ranges, and with the inroads being made upon the horses of the West by the war, his half-civilized brother, the broncho, promises to disappear. Thousands of horses have been taken from Colorado, Wyoming, and other western States.

Not only have British and French buyers invaded this section, but representatives of the Italian government have combed the country for months.

During the last few weeks an Italian buyer purchased several hundred horses, and so great was his haste to get them to his home country that they were sent by express from Denver to the East instead of by freight. There they were to be hurried aboard a steamer for Italy.

This draining of the West of horses means that in the rehabilitation a better breed of horses will be produced. It is this that sounds the death knell of the broncho. Stallions and mares of standard breeds, draft, and general-purpose horses have been placed throughout the West. Their progeny are already influencing the general trend of development of the horses in the section to which the work of the government is being centered. As the demand for horses to replace those sold for war service increases, it will be animals of better breeds which will take their places.

When the British government was purchasing horses for use in the Boer War, it was necessary to employ broncho-busters, who spent weeks battling with the prospective mounts for British cavalrymen before they were conquered and sufficiently subdued to the saddle to satisfy the government agent. This year there is little evidence that the British or French are in danger of suffering casualties through encountering the American horses.

Constant association with man through the years between the Boer War and the present, instead of roaming over unfenced plains, has had its influence on the horse. The "never-say-die" fighting spirit of the old broncho in his struggle against the touch of leather and his intense hatred of man, because he was representative of enslavement to the saddle, has slowly flickered out. Breeding and association has brought about the inevitable.

Movie Pictures by Daylight.

Moving pictures in broad daylight were shown in New York recently. They were exactly like the movies on a thousand screens in darkened theaters at the same time—noon. The only apparent difference a beholder noted was that the light projecting the picture came from behind the screen, and the camera room, in back of the screen, was invisible.

This new invention, now ready for the market, its backers say, has several striking advantages over the ordinary movie.

The first and foremost is that the pictures can be shown under any kind of light. You can set up the screen on your lawn, put the camera behind it and the audience in front, and give a whole show, no matter how brightly the sun is shining.

With this kind of moving picture, the open-air film shows, which are popular in large cities during warm weather, will be able to give continuous performances all day, instead of running shows for a few hours at night.

Lake or no Lake?

Whether a law of nature can in any way affect court decisions appears to be an issue in a case which comes to the supreme court from Brule County, South Dakota.

In that county there is a "lake" which is called Red Lake. In early days of settlement it was quite a body of water, but during dry years has dwindled to more or less of a marsh, and holders on adjoining lands have laid claim to sections of it as accretion lands.

Residents of that section some time ago raised a fund to sink a couple of artesian wells on the shores of this pond and flood it with water, making a real lake of it, as was done at Lake Andes, in Charles Mix County.

The work was commenced and one well sunk, when the adjoining landowners went into court, asking an injunction to prevent further action. This was denied by Judge Smith, of the circuit court, and an appeal was taken to the supreme court.

The past winter the snowfall in that section was the heaviest for years, and its melting this spring has completely filled the lake to its old boundaries, with the issue still pending an appeal.

The lake covers about 4,000 acres, and the object of those sinking the wells was to restore it to its old meander lines and make it a summer-outing place for the people of that part of the State.

To Pay Vets in Confederate Money.

A unique plan of rewarding in a sentimental way the men who fought for the cause of the Confederacy has been launched by J. M. Williams, of Memphis, Tenn., who recently was appointed paymaster general, with the rank of brigadier general, of the United Confederate Veterans.

The plan is to collect $2,000,000 in the currency of the Confederate States of America and distribute it among the veterans at the reunion at Richmond, Va., which likely will be the last official gathering of the veterans.

General Williams, in letters sent out to the camps of veterans over the South, says that while the Confederate money, of course, is of no value, he thinks that the sentiment carried with the idea will at least delight the hearts

of the men who fought so long and so valorously with scarcely a cent of compensation, and prove a worthy reminder of the appreciation of their services to the Southland.

Clings to Cliff Four Hours.

With arms and legs extended in a spread-eagle position that added to the uncertainty of his desperate position, Peter Johnson, a fisherman on the halibut schooner *Idaho*, recently returned to Seattle, Wash., from Alaska, clung for more than four hours to the face of an Alaskan cliff 1,300 feet above a rocky beach, and lives to tell the tale only because of the pluck and nerve of Charles Quinn, of the same vessel.

Quinn climbed to the top of the cliff, 1,600 feet above the beach, and lowered a rope to Johnson and pulled him up just as the sailor was about to give up and drop to the rocky beach.

The Prettiest Princess.

Princess Marie Jose, the third child of the King and Queen of Belgium, born on August 4, 1900, is said to be the prettiest child of all the ruling families of Europe. Shortly after the beginning of the Belgian invasion she was sent to London with her two brothers, Prince Leopold, Duke de Brabant, and Prince Charles, Count de Flandre, and has been there ever since.

Tin Ear is Not Necessary.

"There isn't any excuse for a boxer having a cauliflower ear," remarked Young Corbett, as he pointed to an old-timer whose ears were curled against his head in grotesque fashion.

"It's a simple matter to guard against if one treats them properly. It's no disgrace to have them, mind you, but why tolerate what you can avoid?

"Nearly all the clever men have them. It means that you've got to pay proper attention to an ear if you should get one injured. When a blow breaks one of the little bloodvessels, the ear swells up. The correct thing to do is to have the ear lanced at the back. I've had that done a dozen times, and you see my ears. Just as well formed as though I never had been in a fight.

"It makes me angry to see youngsters with big tin ears when there is no necessity for it. Just a little care and application of the lance and there couldn't be any such deformities."

Use of Cotton in War Dips Deep in Supply

Cotton statisticians who find difficulty in accounting for the large exports of the staple to Europe, where a large portion of the manufacturing industry is prostrated will do well to investigate use of this raw material for war purposes. They are well aware that unusual quantities of khaki for uniforms, duck for tents, tarpaulins and artillery covers, tire cloth for automobiles, and other woven and knitted fabrics are being demanded by the belligerents, but they are likely to overlook two important uses of cotton that are absorbing hundreds of thousands of bales of the staple.

It is rather startling to learn that it takes a bale of cotton to shoot one of the big German forty-two-centimeter siege guns, and that a modern dreadnaught in action explodes ten to twelve bales of cotton every minute. Approximately a pound of raw cotton is needed in making every pound of guncotton, and the powder production of Europe and this country is not far from 350,000,000 pounds annually under present forced conditions. This accounts for about 700,000 bales of cotton, largely linters and waste.

Then there is the enormous demand for absorbent cotton and bandages. This probably calls for about 50,000,000 pounds of cotton annually, or about 100,000 bales. In fact, it is quite likely that figures could be deduced to show that the war demand for cotton is largely counterbalancing the loss of regular demand due to the prostration of the industry in Germany, Austria, Belgium, and France.

Husband Brands Wife with Lighted Cigar

A "K" extending across the wrist of Mrs. Alexander Kozlinska, of Cleveland, Ohio, which will become a brand when the burn heals, is her husband's method of preventing her from leaving him. Police, to whom she told her story, did not approve wife branding, and Kozlinska was arrested at the home on a charge of assault and battery.

Mrs. Kozlinska, who is twenty-three years old swore to an affidavit before Police Prosecutor Silbert that the "K" had been seared on her wrist by her husband, Alexander, with a lighted cigar.

"We had quarreled, and I told the neighbors I would leave him," declared Mrs. Kozlinska. "As soon as the neighbors were gone, he seized me and said he would give me a present so I would never leave him. He held me while he burned the mark into my wrist and when I cried afterward, he struck my forehead with a flatiron."

The two small children, Helen, four years old, and Clara, two years old, were terrified witnesses of the branding of their mother.

Uncle Sam Excels as Model Builder.

When the United States patent office revoked the regulation requiring models of all patents, it was thought that the model-making industry was doomed to extermination, but it has developed strongly on somewhat different lines, and there is more of a demand for work of this character now than ever before. The Panama-Pacific Exposition is showing a number of models which have been constructed at considerable expense and with great fidelity. The United States government is one of the greatest model builders in the world at the present time. Miniatures of all great works and all important boats of the navy have been built and exhibited.

The latest work in this line by Uncle Sam is the construction of a number of models illustrating the construction and maintenance of standard types of roads. Included in this set are models showing the development of stone road building for 2,000 years past, among which were the Appian Way, representing an ancient Roman type of construction, samples of early French roads, the Telford, and early and modern macadam roads. Other models show samples of bad alignment, improper grades, dangerous crossings, unsafe bridges and many other features necessary to understand when laying out good roads. All of these models, made on a scale of one inch to the foot, are large enough to perfectly illustrate their point.

Among the notable models shown at the exposition at San Francisco is one of the city of New York, exhibited by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, the principal object of which is to display the entrance of the tracks of

that line into the heart of the American metropolis, which it does perfectly. All the principal buildings of the city are accurately reproduced, as well as the features of the harbor.

A New Bridle.

A safety bridle has been constructed which enables the driver to blindfold the horse by pulling a special rein. A blindfolding curtain is wrapped on a roller on each side of the animal's head, and strings lead from these curtains to a spring roller, placed on the front of the head, and a catch prevents this spring roller from turning. The special rein controls the catch and it passes through guides, over the animal's head, to the driver. Pulling the rein releases the spring roller, which then winds up the curtain strings from each side of the head, unrolling both curtains and completely covering the horse's eyes.

Odd Facts About Bamboo.

Certain species of bamboos flower only once in about fifty-five years, and, strangely enough, all the trees in a locality flower about the same time. Those in Burma began flowering last year, and now they are all in blossom. The last time this species flowered was in 1859-60. They will now die and those that spring from the seeds born of this flowering will take their places and will not flower until about 1970. They may flower sporadically at other times, but the seed does not mature, for the bamboo cannot fertilize itself.

Convicts to Labor on Mound.

A force of convicts from the State penitentiary at Moundsville, W. Va., began the task of restoring a mound, one of the largest works of the mound builders in the Ohio Valley. The mound has been taken over by the State and will be converted into a park. A movement is on foot to erect on the summit a monument to the memory of Captain Foreman, who, with twenty-five others, was massacred by Indians in 1787 a short distance from the mound.

Breaks Both Wooden Legs.

Five thousand dollars for two wooden legs broken in a fall on a rough, icy sidewalk is asked for by George Beck in a suit filed against the city of St. Joseph, Mo. Beck lost his legs as the result of being frozen several years ago. In his suit he says that when he fell, both legs were broken, and splinters penetrated his trousers. He says he suffered other injuries as well.

Bible Breaks Woman's Bones.

Because a Bible broke two of her ribs, Mrs. Ida B. Bryant, of Kansas City, Mo., was given a judgment in the circuit court for $1,750.

Mrs. Bryant was returning from church with her Bible under her arm. As she stepped from the car, it started up, and she was thrown to the pavement in such a way that the Bible pressed against her side and broke the ribs.

Baby Has Ten Grandparents.

It isn't every baby who can be quite as proud as Mabel Louise Dunn, of Minneapolis, Minn. Mabel Louise is just six weeks old and she has ten grandparents. Her mother and father are Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Dunn, and her mother is just twenty years old.

The grandparents proper are Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Dunn and Mr. and Mrs. D. L. Skoog, of Minneapolis, and four great-grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. A. Erickson and Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Nichols, of Minneapolis. Besides, Mabel Louise has two great-great-grandparents, Mrs. L. A. Legg, aged seventy-eight, of California, and Mrs. B. Skoog, also seventy-eight, of Minneapolis.

Submarine Device by a Boy.

Cecil Elliott, a seventeen-year-old schoolboy at the Peekskill, N. Y., Academy, has perfected plans for a special device to be used in releasing mines from a submarine against the bottom of its prey. The mines are contained in special watertight boxes.

Put Rats and Bugs in Children's Clothing.

As a result of the investigation of charges against Superintendent August Kringel, of the Home for Dependent Children, in Milwaukee, Wis., alleging gross cruelties, Miss Hanna Kremer, forty years old, matron of the institution, hanged herself.

Former nurses testifying before the county board investigating committee, had declared Miss Kremer was guilty of horrible outrages upon the little wards, and she sent in her resignation.

As the hearing continued, other witnesses corroborated the stories of how Miss Kremer mistreated children by tying dead rats and mice under their clothing, next to their bodies, and other charges of shocking cruelties were made, including beatings that were violent and inhuman.

A few days later Miss Kremer, who for several years has been the sole support of her mother, took dinner with her mother, a brother, and a sister at their home. After dinner Miss Kremer went upstairs. An hour later her dead body was found hanging from a rafter in the attic.

When enumerating the methods of punishment inflicted on the children, Miss Kispert said she often saw the matron collect cockroaches and imprison them in the clothing of the little girls and boys.

Another method of punishment common at the institution, Miss Kispert said, was to plunge children from two to six, naked, into tubs of cold water.

Doctor G. H. Scholz, Miss Kremer's family physician, said he had known her all her life and always considered her a kind-hearted woman. He talked to her a few days before she killed herself.

"She told me," he said, "she would never be able to survive the criticism made by certain people who testified at the county-board hearing. She said the testimony was untrue, and that she had never illtreated the children."

Over 1,000 Squirrels on Trial for Lives.

Legal talent of Omaha, together with Mayor James C. Dahlman, the cowboy mayor, and Park Commissioner Joe Hummel, are battling to save the lives of something over a thousand timber squirrels living in the parks and roaming all over the wooded part of the city.

The squirrels are on trial for their lives. The Omaha Real-estate Exchange is the accuser. Heading the real-estate forces is George G. Wallace, old-time real-estate man of the city. The exchange charges the squirrels with murder. The authority of Doctor S. R. Towne, of Omaha, one of the leading ornithologists in the West, is

cited by the real-estate men to prove that squirrels slay birds by the thousands, in the egg. They are nest robbers, so say the real-estate men, and so says their authority, Doctor Towne.

"No matter; they shall not be condemned," say Mayor Dahlman and Park Commissioner Joe Hummel. Hummel has always seen to it that the park squirrels had high-priced corn to eat during the Nebraska blizzards in the winter. Mayor Dahlman sits by the hour on his front porch on summer Sundays and watches the squirrels play over his porch pillars and swing from the maple trees in his front yard just across the street from Hanscom Park.

A State game law protects squirrels except two months in the fall. The city further protects the Omaha squirrels as an asset to the parks. They rob nests and plunder the bird cradles, but they shall not die if legal talent can save them and Commissioner Hummel and Mayor Dahlman have their way.

The real-estate exchange seeks to have an ordinance passed condemning squirrels and providing for the execution of every squirrel in the city and the extermination of all that shall follow them.

A good fight is looked for when the ordinance is finally introduced as not all the city commissioners have as yet committed themselves on the question.

Big Bear Chases Trainmen.

After a train of the Philadelphia & Reading Railway stopped to do some shifting near Rupert, Pa., the crew was surprised to see a big black bear trotting toward the locomotive. They shouted, but the animal came on and the men retreated to the top of the water tank.

Without stopping, bruin ran to the steps and tried to climb up. They pelted it with coal, and Engineer David Hess gave the whistle a long toot. Apparently frightened, the big beast turned tail and disappeared in a thicket.

Has Bullet That Struck Him.

Hiram Parsons, who recently went to Big Laurel, Va., to live with his daughter, Mrs. Fred Hollingsworth, has in his possession the bullet that wounded him in the battle of Bull Run.

The bullet is one of the old Minié balls, and Mr. Parsons received it in his shoulder from a gun in the hands of a Confederate soldier. "Uncle Hi" values the ball as one of his greatest belongings, and says that he believes it has brought him good luck since the day it was taken from his shoulder by an army surgeon.

Find Telltale Bits of Paper.

Bits of charred paper found in an old pewter urn were largely responsible for the conviction of two brothers, Charles and David Esterson, for concealing the assets of the bankrupt skirt-making firm of Kessler & Temkin, of New York City, so as to defraud the creditors.

The burned papers were fragments of an agreement in which the Estersons promised to pay Mrs. Kessler and Mrs. Temkin two thousand dollars a year each in case their husbands were sent to prison for fraud.

When Julius Kessler and Louis Temkin, on the eve of the trial of the four conspirators, pleaded guilty and sought leniency, the Estersons tried to cancel the agreement by burning it up in the pewter urn.

The incineration of the paper being incomplete, Raymond H. Sarfaty, assistant United States district attorney, pieced the fragments, and was able to convince the jury that the Estersons were parties to the bankruptcy fraud, which exceeded $13,000. The verdict was returned in the criminal branch of the United States district court, and, after the conviction, the Estersons were held in $10,000 bail each for sentence.

Odd Accident in a Sawmill.

An accident to another workman was the means of saving the life of Hiram Hill, aged twenty, in E. A. Breed's portable sawmill in Barnet, Vt.

Hill was working on an edger, when his glove caught and pulled him onto the saw. By a mere chance another employee got some sawdust in his eye at the same moment, and, stepping back to get away from the saw, accidentally struck the level which throws off the carriage, and the saw stopped.

As it was, Hill was terribly injured and was brought to the hospital at St. Johnsbury. His left shoulder was fearfully cut and mangled and his back was badly cut, but he stands a chance of recovery.

Master Buried with His Dog.

In the will of Horace K. Parkman, just filed at Skowhegan, Me., he directed that a tombstone be erected over the grave of his dog in the cemetery and another over his own body. Mr. Parkman died recently and was buried with the dog. He was eccentric and lived alone in a cottage most of his life. He left about $2,000 to various friends.

He Couldn't Reach that Ten Dollars.

Johnny Evers, of the Boston Braves, recently told the story of a ten-dollar bill that cost a ball game.

"A certain player—he's still in the game—was sitting on the bench," said Johnny. "He was then only a recruit. The game was close. In the last of the ninth there were runners on second and third. A hit of almost any kind would bring in the two runs the club needed to win the game. It was the pitcher's turn at bat.

"The manager's eye hit on the rooky. The opposing pitcher had never faced him. 'Go up to bat, Blank, and if you bring in those two men I'll give you a ten-spot,' said the manager. The 'kid' stepped up to the plate and promptly struck out.

"On the way to the clubhouse the manager turned to him and said: 'What was the matter with you? You might have broken your back going after those high ones.'

"'That's just it,' replied Blank. 'I guess I was reaching too far for that ten-spot.'"

Earned the Bonehead Medal.

"Take it from me," said Frank Bancroft, secretary of the Cincinnati Reds, while some of the athletes were discussing famous bonehead plays, "the old-timers pulled some bones that had all you youngsters backed off the map. Best I recollect just now was sprung by Miah Murray when he was catching for me at Worcester, about thirty-five years ago. With a runner on first, Miah steamed back to the stand and made a magnificent catch of a foul fly.

"The crowd broke into roars of applause. Murray, lean-

ing against the stand, took off his cap and bowed right and left, and the runner, sizing up the situation, lit out from first, kept right on going, and came all the way around while Miah kept bowing and the rest of the team were screeching and raving, all in vain."

Mirrors to Foil Burglars.

In constructing a vault in the basement of one of the Los Angeles banks, a plan has been followed which makes the six sides of the chamber visible to a watchman and eliminates all chances of its being entered by tunneling beneath it. It is set on concrete columns in the middle of a white-tiled pit, which is brightly illuminated.

To make it possible to command a view of the space beneath the vault, from the level above, mirrors have been arranged on the floor at such an angle that every part of the space is reflected in them. Light is reflected by the white walls so that the top of the vault is illuminated and easily inspected.

Motor Cyclists Race for Life with Train.

Charles Howell, twenty years old, and William Dare, nineteen, both of Camden, N. J., narrowly escaped death when they rode a motor cycle ahead of a train on the Brenlock branch of the Atlantic City Railroad for a distance of over 150 yards.

While returning home from Gloucester, they failed to note the approach of a train, the view being obstructed by houses, until the engine loomed up before them. Howell, who was driving the machine, turned up the tracks ahead of the engine, putting on full speed. The train gained on them, and Howell, to avoid a collision, turned toward the bank. The cowcatcher struck the machine, and both were thrown several feet, but escaped serious injury.

Men See Fair Nymphs in Bath.

A water nymph, whose shapely form was incased in a suit of tight-fitting black glistening material, sleeveless, collarless, and legless, paused on the edge of the springboard over the swimming pool in the Germantown, Pa., Y. W. C. A. building, gazed around the splashing area before posing for a graceful "jackknife" dive, and suddenly, with a shrill scream of dismay, sprawled from her perch into the water.

Other nymphs, similarly attired, crowded to the edge of the pool, waiting for the excited sister to explain her undignified and hurried plunge. Finally she regained her voice and cried: "Men, men, men!"

She pointed dramatically toward several windows far up the wall near the roof windows, that were supposed to be opaque. The dozen along the edge looked at the windows. Then, like a dozen bullfrogs, they dived simultaneously into the pool and screamed. Miss Lehman, superintendent, was called and notified the police.

Thirty Children, Mother Forty-five.

Mother of thirty children and only forty-five years old is the remarkable record of Mrs. G. W. H. Ross, who lives on a farm near Atchison, Kan. The stork has brought her twins five times. Her youngest child is two years old. Thirteen of the children are still at home, while the others have gone to make their own living.

Despite the fact that she has had the care of so large a family Mrs. Ross is still a young-looking woman for her age.

Big Cop Nabs Spooning Pair.

"Whose little lovey dovey is oo?"

"Your little lovey dovey. Whose is oo?"

"Yours." Smack! Smack!

This endearing language came from a lawn on Poplar Street, Philadelphia, Pa., just before one o'clock the other morning, and squashed upon the ears of Heil, a robust policeman.

Heil listened to the mellifluous colloquy several minutes, then decided to investigate. He found a young man and a young woman standing beneath a tree and pouring out their souls to one another.

Heil gently reminded them that another's lawn was no place to keep trysts, and suggested that they move on. The two became indignant and argued with the bluecoat. Heil then arrested them.

The man, who gave his name as Hugh Curran, twenty-two years old, was discharged by Magistrate Grelis with a reprimand. The woman, who said she was Mrs. Francis Lozier, and a divorcee, was sent to the House of Correction for three months on the charge of disorderly conduct.

He Couldn't Outguess Lajoie.

Malachi Kittredge, the veteran catcher, regards Nap Lajoie as the greatest batter the game ever knew. According to Kittredge, it was almost impossible to outguess the Frenchman. He tells a story of a left-hander named Jacobson, who pitched for Washington and who thought he had discovered Lajoie's weakness. After making this discovery, Jacobson faced Lajoie at a critical stage of an important game. Lajoie's weakness was supposed to be a slow curve, rather low. Larry came to the bat and Jacobson gave him that slow curve, rather low. Larry swung, and away went the ball over the center fielder's head, and with it went Jacobson's discovery of Lajoie's weakness.

Aeromobile, Latest Racer.

Edward Lenck, of Cairo, Ill., has invented a new racing machine which is known as an aëromobile. The car combines, as the name would imply, the automobile and the aëroplane. It is operated by an air propeller attached to the rear of the four-wheel car, the theory being the same as that which propels an aëroplane along the ground before it soars into the air. The machine attains a high rate of speed.

"Bugs" Raymond Showed Them.

"Bugs" Raymond, star pitcher of the Giants, now dead, was lunching at a New York café one bright summer noon. The head waiter was a chance acquaintance who was trying to extract some baseball info from Bugs.

"How do you throw the spitball, Mr. Raymond?" he inquired.

Raymond was game. He took up a glass of water and drained its contents. Then he told the waiter to draw close.

"First, I wet these two fingers this way," he explained, illustrating his remarks. "Then I grip the ball this way," wrapping his fingers around the glass.

The head waiter, some of his assistants, and a number of diners gathered close.

"Now watch me closely," said Raymond, as he went through his wind-up. To the amazement and horror of all, he shot the glass at full speed toward a closed door, where it shivered in a hundred pieces.

"Did you see the break?" asked Raymond, as he sat down and resumed his luncheon.

Seeing Portents in Skies.

Meteorological phenomena have been observed so often of late that the question is raised whether there is any relation between them and the continual artillery firing on the battle front. Abbe Moreaux, director of the observatory at Bourges, in France, says that his attention has been called frequently to singular phenomena in the sky, such as halos, crowns, and luminous crosses. Many devout persons see in the latter manifestations, he says, a mystic sign of approaching victory.

Abbe Moreaux says that these crosses are reflections produced by humidity in the atmosphere. He asserts that they have no connection with the artillery firing.

Big Eagle Attacks Two Men.

William and John Simpson, brothers, living near Parsippany, N. J., had a fight with a great bird, which, they say, was an eagle, when hunting muskrats on the Big Piece Meadows. The bird appeared and hovered over them for a few seconds, and then shot down, striking first one and then the other.

Warding off the bird's beak and talons, the young men ran to higher ground, when the eagle turned and flew away. Both brothers were scratched and bruised about the head, face, and arms.

Good Luck in Midget Auto.

Glenn T. Peters bought him a fine little half-portion race-about automobile. He was buzzing about in it west of Cleveland the other day.

The automobile hit a rut. In another moment it turned turtle. Mr. Peters was under it. He considers himself most lucky. He says philosophically:

"If I had bought me a full-size automobile and it had overturned on top of me, I might have been hurt;" and no one disputes him.

Have Whips for Captives.

Georges Rebsamen, a dentist of Geneva, Switzerland, has been a German prisoner for five months, although a Swiss. He was taken into custody in France and held in the Nieder Zwehren camp. Set at liberty recently, he has just returned home.

He reports that there are 20,000 British, French, and Russian prisoners at Nieder Zwehren. He says the food is fairly good, but calls the sanitary conditions deplorable. The British received the worst treatment.

Some of the camp guards were armed with heavy whips, with which they strike the prisoners for slight offenses.

Never Too Old to Wed, Says Joplin Man, 101.

William L. Miller, one hundred and one years old, and Mrs. Nancy B. Pike, sixty, were married in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in Joplin, Mo.

When Miller announced his engagement, he issued a general invitation to the public, declaring it probably would be the last time his friends would be afforded an opportunity to see him lead a bride to the altar. He has been married twice previously, his first wife dying twenty years ago, and his second in April, 1914. Mrs. Pike's husband also is dead.

Miller obtains a livelihood by selling soap. In the summer he also sells produce from a garden he cultivates himself. He was born in Alabama February 1, 1814.

Big Mileage in Big League.

The National League schedule for the present season requires the eight clubs to travel 83,593 miles. The Western clubs will cover more than the Eastern teams. Pittsburgh leads with 12,595 miles, and the New York Giants have the least traveling to do, their total for the season being put at 8,825. Figuring on teams at twenty-one players and four others, including managers, trainer, and secretary, this gives a total of 2,089,825 for the two hundred players and others in the league. At two cents a mile, the minimum railroad mileage charge, the sum to be expended by the clubs between April 1st and October 7th will amount to $41,796.50. Meals and sleeping berths will add many thousands to these figures.

Oddest Idea for Acrostic.

The seventh child recently arrived at the J. W. Aldrich home in Center Township, Iowa. The names of the children, set down in the order of their birth, form an acrostic of the family name "Aldrich," viz.:

A-lvin Aldrich.
L-emuel Lorenzo.
D-elbert Darrell.
R-ichard Ruel.
I-sador Immanuel.
C-harlotte Chloe.
H-illard Harold.

The parents were not aware that the names formed an acrostic until their attention was called to it.

Girls Roam in Twenty-acre Wood.

Park College, a coeducational school in Parkville, Mo., has put its students under the honor system in a social way. The girls at the college protested against being prohibited from walking in the woods surrounding the college without chaperons. As a result, a twenty-acre tract has been set aside for them, and all the men at the college has been placed upon their honor not to invade the tract.

The men have agreed, but they have already dubbed the twenty-acre tract the "Dear Park." Some few call it the "Chicken Ranch."

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